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PLUS  
THE  
RUNWAY  
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wore the  
makeup...  
and we  
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JANUARY 2016  
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# JANUARY

THIS MONTH IN CULTURE!

● Fresh off a label bidding war, Wet, a trio that puts out an addictively smooth blend of R&B and indie rock, releases *Don't You*, its long-awaited debut LP. *January 29*

**January 3** Will Lady Mary ever find love? Will Bates ever stop getting framed? Upstairs-downstairs soap *Downton Abbey* returns for its sixth and final season.

● **January 5** A pair of twisted true-life tales delve into the '60s: In *Stories I Tell Myself*, Juan F. Thompson, son of Hunter, describes growing up gonzo. Meanwhile, in *Sharon Tate*, Ed Sanders takes a look at the doe-eyed actress's life and death.



● **January 8** Samuel L. Jackson and other gun-toting, animal pelt-wearing, mostly bad guys—plus Jennifer Jason Leigh—square off in Quentin Tarantino's wintry western *The Hateful Eight*.

**January 8 Horror-fest** *The Forest* finds Natalie Dormer in a Japanese wood, seeking her twin. Whatever you do, locals warn, don't leave the path! (Spoiler: She leaves the path.)

**January 13** Mexican art star Pia Camil, a master of spectacle and spectacular, fills the lobby of NYC's New Museum with a sculptural installation.



● **January 15** In *The 5th Wave*, Chloë Grace Moretz stars as a plucky teen trying to rescue her brother in a world controlled by evil-alien "Others." (Some hunks help along the way.)

**January 17** A hedge-fund titan (Damian Lewis) squares off against a U.S. Attorney (Paul Giamatti) in Showtime's greed- and hubris-focused *Billions*.

● **January 19** Ten days before Rochelle Feinstein's long-overdue career survey opens at Geneva's Centre d'Art Contemporain, the glossy new book *I'm With Her* offers a cohesive overview of her medium-mixing.



**January 21–31** Polish up your Uggs! The taste-making Sundance Film Festival returns to Park City, Utah.

● **January 22** Pioneering, primal-screaming icon Yoko Ono teams up with tUnE-yArDs (and others) for *Yes, I'm a Witch Too*, a collection of covers and remixes of her best songs.



● **January 24** Conspiracy theorists, rejoice: FOX brings us a six-episode reboot of *The X-Files*.

● **January 31** FOX also gets on the live-musical bandwagon with *Grease: Live*, starring Julianne Hough (Sandy), Vanessa Hudgens (Rizzo!), and Carly Rae Jepsen (Frenchy).



Wet: Milan Zelic; The 5th Wave: Columbia Pictures Industries; Ono: Ben A. Puchner/Getty Images; The X-Files: Ed Arquette/FOX; Jepsen: Cindy Ord/Getty Images; Hudgens: JB Lacroix/WireImage; Hough: David Livingston/Getty Images; Feinstein artwork: courtesy of Rochelle Feinstein; Daughter: Francesca Jane Allen; The Hateful Eight: © 2015 The Weinstein Company (2)

● **January 15** Daughter, the moody, emotive, dreamy British band fronted by Elena Tonra, releases the 10-track album *Not to Disappear*, the follow-up to its acclaimed 2013 debut, *If You Leave*.





BOTTEGA VENETA



ELLE

102

96

## ON THE COVER

**41, 57, 95 ELLE FASHION: THE LOOK, TRENDS, AND ACCESSORIES**

Fresh from the spring 2016 runways: wide-leg crops, art-school knits, and dressed-up, dressed-down athleisure

**82 TWO WEEKS' NOTICE**

Seven test subjects commit to 14-day resolutions, from the latest diet to a runway makeup bonanza to a radical smartphone plan

**96 UNDER HER SKIN**

Rooney Mara's onscreen transformations keep us guessing almost as much as her offscreen elusiveness. Lauren Waterman talks with the actor about her Oscar-bait part in *Carol* and the first role where she "felt really unapologetic and comfortable"

## FASHION

**28 THE SOUL SEARCHERS**

Change your point of view, literally! Globe-traipsing writers share tales of adventure and awakening, from a chance encounter in a Turkish bathhouse to a mind-blowing peek inside a Chilean iceberg

**38 OM BASE**

Fancy a Portuguese sleep retreat? A full-body Balinese cleanse? Don't we all! Find the perfect spa for a mind-body reboot—or a New Year's resolution do-over

**50 RUNWAY REPORT**

The fashion world is experiencing Richter-level tremors, with three top designers leaving their highly coveted roles. Anne Slowey reports on spring 2016

**54 ALEXANDER THE GREAT**

After saying good-bye to Balenciaga, Alexander Wang speculates on the future of fashion and unveils his new jewelry line. By Anne Slowey

**102 SHE'S COME UNDONE**

Peekaboo underpinnings take the chill off monochromatic tailoring. Photographed by Liz Collins. Styled by Samira Nasr

**116 TOUR DE FRANCE**

Couture detailing adds a modern touch to Parisian street style. Photographed by David Burton. Styled by Barbara Baumel

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

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Clockwise from top left: Cedric Buchet; Liz Collins; David Burton

ELLE

14 CONTENTS

JANUARY 2016 VOLUME XXXI NUMBER 5 NO. 365



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### 138 AMERICAN EPIC

Mickey Rapkin and Harrison Ford talk first impressions, sex symbols, and the silly state of California

### BEAUTY, HEALTH & FITNESS

#### 67 BREAKING DAWN

Look on the bright side: Sculpt features with light (not shadows)

#### 68 TOP OF THE WORLD

For the third annual International Beauty Awards, we bring you the cream (and mascara!) of the crop. By Ali Finney

#### 72 SOUND EFFECTS

New M.A.C Cosmetics collaborator Ellie Goulding talks inspiration and the art of faux lashes. By April Long

### 74 IT LIST

#### 76 OUT, DAMNED SPOT!

Acne got you down? Megan O'Neill investigates the latest treatments

### IN EVERY ISSUE

12 CALENDAR

22 REPLY ALL

23 CONTRIBUTORS

24 EDITOR'S LETTER

57 ELLE SHOPS

134 SHOPPING GUIDE

136 HOROSCOPE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14  
FEATURES

#### 26 THE ELLE AGENDA

Kickstarting the ELLE Agenda for 2016! Eight hot-button issues—the wage gap, tech's gender imbalance, the status of female directors in Hollywood—that should be on every woman's radar now

#### 62 ELLE INTELLIGENCE

Dua Lipa's genre mash-up...Elizabeth Strout examines mother-daughter relationships in *My Name Is Lucy Barton*... Two new satirical, testosterone-heavy films probe at capitalism's discontents... and more!

#### 88 POLITICAL? CORRECT.

Lisa Shea talks with Kia Corthron—the playwright, novelist, and activist—about her political art, its literary influences, and why she's an anomaly in the art world

#### 90 TRAIL OF TERROR

Is fear something we necessarily have to push past? Molly Langmuir has a wild—but not so *Wild*—experience backpacking Grand Teton National Park

#### 92 ASK E. JEAN Relationship hell? E. Jean Carroll to the rescue!

#### 128 THE PEN AND THE SWORD

As an actress, Danai Gurira has slayed *The Walking Dead*. Now, as a playwright, she's taking on Broadway with her critically acclaimed *Eclipsed*. By Seth Plattner



Rooney Mara (left) wears a studded-linen blouse and viscose and silk pants from Louis Vuitton. Mara (right) wears an embroidered chiffon crepon dress from Gucci. To get Mara's makeup look, try All Day Luminous Weightless Foundation, Brow Perfector in Suriname, Audacious Mascara, and Velvet Matte Lip Pencil in Dragon Girl. All, Nars. Photographed by Cedric Buchet (styled by David Vandewal; hair by Ward at the Wall Group for Living Proof; makeup by Kate Lee at Starworks Artists for Chanel Beauté; manicure by Geraldine Halford at the Wall Group for Dior Vernis; set design by Colin Donahue for Owl and the Elephant; production by County Fair Productions; fashion assistants: Daniel Gaines, Salima Breile-Jobarteh, and Tas Tobey).

Clockwise from top left: Owen Bruce; Sisley Spa; Devon Jarvis/Studio D; © David Needleman/Corbis Outlines; Blaine Jonasson



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## NATALIE MACNEIL

Ready to supercharge your New Year's resolutions? This month, let our ultimate self-starting businesswoman guide you into your most accomplished year yet

In 2006, while studying business and political science at Canada's University of Waterloo, Natalie MacNeil entered a nationwide business competition called Impact, modeled after Donald Trump's *The Apprentice*. When her team won, she remembers thinking, "This entrepreneurial thing? I *have* to do it."

Nearly a decade later, Toronto native MacNeil (who is currently organizing a move to New York City—a full-time job in itself) has turned herself into an entrepreneur whose business is encouraging others with their entrepreneurial endeavors. MacNeil's website, *She Takes On the World*, offers weekly lessons and inspiration for the aspiring business owner and has expanded from a personal blog to a full-blown brand, complete with well-produced online

informational episodes, two accompanying books—*She Takes On the World* (Infinity, 2012) and the just-released *The Conquer Kit* (Perigee)—and The Conquer Club, a 12-month business program launched in 2013 that provides hands-on help from MacNeil and her team. Entrepreneurs who have turned to MacNeil have kicked off businesses in fields as varied as graphic design, marketing strategy, organic skin care, ethical beauty products, and TV production.

Luckily, MacNeil has always felt most comfortable juggling several projects at once. After winning that contest way back when, she tried her hand at real-world entrepreneurialism by starting an auditing business that she describes as "kind of like mystery shopping [for phone-service providers], but on a

much larger scale." Driving up to 10 hours each way to fulfill projects for her clients, MacNeil worked steadily at her one-person business while simultaneously managing a full course load at Waterloo and working summers on a Toyota assembly line. By the beginning of her third year, awash with inner conflict about whether to start a full-scale business or head to law school, MacNeil had saved enough to take a solo vacation to Europe. In the middle of a road trip through the Czech Republic, she recalls, "I was listening to 'The World Is Mine,' by David Guetta. At the same time, I drove by a giant globe—it was like two stories high—and it said, 'The World Is Yours.'" She took it as a sign that her passion project was the one to stick with.

And that she did. In 2008, MacNeil created her brand, *She Takes On the World*, teaming with local businesses to build their social media presence and execute marketing campaigns. Meanwhile, she also cofounded the digital production company Imaginarius and, in 2011, coproduced the Digital Emmy Award-winning Web documentary *Highrise: Out My Window*, which follows the lives of families in high-rise buildings across the globe. With that milestone in her rearview, she decided it was time to turn her full attention to *She Takes On the World*.

This January, MacNeil lends her business savvy to ELLE.com for four weeks of intensive lessons: Whether you're looking to branch out with a side hustle or just hoping to make your days a little more productive, you now have a coach to help you on your way. Consider yourself launched. —*Keziah Weir*

## DO IT YOURSELF

Have an idea? Don't know where to start? Tune in to [ELLE.com/coach-of-the-month](http://ELLE.com/coach-of-the-month)



### JANUARY 4

#### Mind Game

When you're tackling a daunting project, mental preparation is half the battle. MacNeil makes it easy.



### JANUARY 11

#### Globe-Plotter

Break down your big-picture goals into more manageable projects with MacNeil's step-by-step system.



### JANUARY 18

#### Get Picky

Despite popular opinion, saying yes to everything won't necessarily help you get ahead. Learn how to manage your time and up your productivity.



### JANUARY 25

#### On Brand

Maximize your opportunities with MacNeil's need-to-know tips on building your business—like how to let your contacts and social media do the heavy lifting.

Clockwise from top left: Hilary Gauld-Camilleri; Tom Grill/Getty Images; UpperCut Images/Getty Images; Image Source RF/Cadape/Getty Images; Hero Images/Getty Images





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Ava DuVernay



Dakota Johnson

# WOMEN IN HOLLYWOOD HITS HOME

For ELLE's twenty-second annual Women in Hollywood issue, we honored Alicia Vikander, Kate Winslet, Amy Schumer, Dakota Johnson, Ava DuVernay, Salma Hayek, Carey Mulligan, and Gena Rowlands—as always, “some of the most impressive ladies in the biz” (thank you, *Us* magazine).

E! Online called Schumer's cover “sultry” and noted that Rowlands “positively stuns at 85”—amen to that—while ELLE readers deemed Hayek's wet-hair look “a showstopper” and Winslet's photo “everything I've been missing recently from mainstream titles...a beautiful face with real character, something that's

so simple yet so striking.”

The awards dinner itself, held October 19 at the Four Seasons Beverly Hills, was “perhaps more timely than ever,” according to *Variety*'s Jasmin Rosenberg, and it certainly felt that way in the room. Johnson's cheering section alone—grandmother Tippi Hedren, mother Melanie Griffith, and little sister Stella Banderas—accounted for three generations of righteous Hollywood feminism. Award presenters included Lena Dunham and national treasure Meryl Streep, who set the crowd roaring when she gave the “luminous” Mulligan her award. “If they had this great big meeting once

a year, and they called it ‘Men in Hollywood’...and they gave a lot of awards to the men of Hollywood, we would be pissed!” Streep said. “Oh, wait, they have those meetings...every day, in every city, in every country in the world!” Hayek, after an impassioned speech about her eight-year battle to get the brilliant *Frida* made, had waiters deliver numbered prints by artist Paris Reid to all 250 attendees. “I wanted to do a butterfly to remind everyone that when adversity and trouble and chaos knock on your door, and you feel like you are being diminished as a worm, to not worry,” she said. “It only means that

you're just about to fly.”

In what *Indiewire*'s Laura Berger called “one hell of a speech,” DuVernay discussed self-care, racism, and equality. “Think of this room as a village, one that fights for change on the outside, but one that recognizes that an equal part of that fight is keeping ourselves strong and joyous and sane in a really insane industry. Because our conversation shouldn't be consumed with what he's not doing or what they don't value. We value us. We build our village.... We also blossom because we nourish one another. We focus on *her*—the woman sitting right next to you. We focus on *us*.” ●

Paola Kudacki (6)



# THE DISSENT

One reader expressed her objection to the use of fur on our pages: "Out of all of the fashion magazines still thriving in today's technology-laden society, I choose yours. You delve into topics beyond the surface of fashion and look at cultural issues and multi-media, while still keeping your readers up to date on the current styles. However, I've made a change to be aware of my karmic footprint when it comes to animal cruelty; I wonder if fashion can't move in the same direction. Your fine print on clothing, purses, and shoes includes words like *lamb hair*, *calfskin*, and *rabbit fur*. Lambs and calves are sacrificed for humans to look 'good.' I would love to see a shift to materials that don't come at the cost of a living being's life."

—Heather Miller, e-mail

# FIRST LADY

In "Hillary, C'est Moi" (October 2015), Rebecca Traister writes about her "complex, long-brewing mix of deep admiration and deep reservation" for Hillary Clinton. She found a kindred spirit: "Great article. I'm a man who is a #HotMessForHillary—sexism is the paradigm for every other form of injustice. Inequality grew its roots in sexism. Hillary's candidacy offers a transformational opportunity like no other."

—BC Griffin, ELLE.com

# CONTRIBUTORS

Dawn MacKeen



**PROVENANCE:** Los Feliz, CA  
**NOW:** Orange County, CA  
**PROFESSION:** Writer

**BONA FIDES:** Work has appeared in the *New York Times Magazine*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *Salon*, *Newsday*, and *Smart Money*

**THIS MONTH:** "A Steamy Peace" (page 31)

**READING:** *Snow*, by Orhan Pamuk. "My family's from Turkey, and they were driven out after the Armenian genocide. In Orhan's work, he'll write about the empty Armenian mansions.... It haunts the pages. He was very brave in speaking out about what happened. I respect him immensely for that."

**BINGE-WATCHING:** *Last Week Tonight With John Oliver*

**UPCOMING:** *The Hundred-Year Walk: An Armenian Odyssey*, out January 12.

"This essay that I wrote is adapted from my book and the trip I took following in my grandfather's footsteps. I don't want to completely give it away, but toward the end of my trip, when I went to Syria, I met some people whose grandfather was responsible for saving my grandfather's life."

Dan Smith



**PROVENANCE:** Teddington, West London  
**NOW:** London and New York  
**PROFESSION:** Photographer and director

**BONA FIDES:** BA, communications studies, Coventry University; work has appeared in *Harper's Bazaar China*, the *Observer Magazine*, and *ELLE France*  
**THIS MONTH:** "First Look," "Trends" (page 41)  
**READING:** "Photojournalist

Don McCullin's autobiography [*Unreasonable Behaviour*], but I have a pile of baby books waiting patiently in line, as I have a boy due in late January."

**INSPIRATION:** "The documentary *The True Cost* explores the impact of fashion on people and the planet. It inspired me to spend time in India with Behno, an ethical clothing manufacturer, to take portraits of factory workers."

**FAR-FLUNG:** "The best trip I've ever gone on was a 10-day trek with two friends through Patagonia. We walked for eight hours a day over glaciers, through woodlands, over mountains, and around vast lakes with only what we could fit in our backpacks for food and shelter. We lived on dried food, supplemented by fresh eggs when we occasionally crossed a farm, and we drank from streams."

Alice Randall



**PROVENANCE:** "I was born in Detroit and grew up in DC."  
**NOW:** "Nashville, Music City."

**PROFESSION:** Novelist; writer-in-residence at Vanderbilt University; food activist

**BONA FIDES:** AB, American literature, Harvard University; honorary doctorate, Fisk University; author of *The Wind Done Gone*, *Pushkin and the Queen of Spades*, *Rebel Yell*, and *Ada's Rules*; work has appeared in *O, The Oprah Magazine*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *Oxford American*, and the *New York Times*

**THIS MONTH:** "Shock of the Wild Blue Yonder" (page 32)

**READING:** "I've been reading a lot around the intersections between R&B and country. I recently read *Take Me to the River*, the

Al Green autobiography. I was fascinated by his construction, his sense of himself as having been a country boy."

**INSPIRATION:** "My current absolute passion is *Soul Food Love*, a book I did with my daughter, Caroline Randall Williams. There is so much unwritten history of black America's healthy soul-food past. Getting to document that, to witness it, to discuss it, has been one of the most exciting things I've ever done."

David Burton



**PROVENANCE:** London  
**NOW:** London  
**PROFESSION:** Photographer  
**THIS MONTH:**

"Tour de France" (page 116)

**INSPIRATION:** Instagram.

"I'm quite nosy, and I really enjoy peeping on people. I've only been doing it for a month or so; it's almost like a newspaper for the modern-day Zeitgeist."

**FAR-FLUNG:** "My favorite trip was my first holiday with my wife. We stayed at La Colombe d'Or in Saint-Paul de Vence. We drove down in this old white Porsche that I used to own. She later told me that she hated it, but it was my pride and joy. We had the most magical time, and I remember being so thrilled to have found somebody to share such things with. There were fireworks on the Saturday night and an outdoor disco in the town square. I don't think I've seen Sarah dance since."

**SCREENING:** "A film I can almost recite verbatim, and often do to my assistants, is *Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World*. It's a real guilty pleasure. I'll always watch *Jaws* if it's on TV; the wardrobe is fantastic."

—Cotton Codinha

# ON THE AGENDA

It's a little ironic, isn't it, that on the very same day that the head of a big fashion house was asking my opinion on whether high-end shoppers are pushing back against too much product, I got an e-mail from someone selling the "30-year sweatshirt"—a sweatshirt so sturdily constructed you wouldn't need to buy another one for three decades. His aim, he wrote, was "to put an end to planned obsolescence in the industry that causes a needless cycle of consumption and waste" through "a combination of technology, premium fabrics, and old-school craftsmanship make it built to last a lifetime." My first thought was, Well, my husband has a 30-year sweatshirt. "Still fits!" he likes to say, but I don't want to look at that relic one more second. And then I thought, I have clothes passed on to me by my grandmother and mother: a cashmere sweater set with my grandmother's initials monogrammed on the front; my mother's first wedding dress—the one she didn't wear, ever, as it was for an engagement she called off after falling in love with someone else. These cherished items have lasted a plenty long time, though neither appealed to their previous owners because of their durability. That's just what happens when things are well made. (Namecheck my Gucci loafers, my Tod's bag, my Burberry trench; heck, I still have my high school green-and-gold warm-ups in a fabric that could survive the apocalypse.)


While it's certainly true that the sourcing, manufacturing, and distribution of clothing is a source of pollution, I think it's a little cynical to try to sell me a sweatshirt by endeavoring to stoke outrage at someone else trying to sell me a sweatshirt. And also, to believe we buy new things, especially fashion, only because we're manipulated by malevolent forces seems almost willfully blinkered. The reasons that women—make that people—wish for, save for, and acquire new things, from clothes to cars to music to furniture to computers to candles, are manifold and often delightfully idiosyncratic. What with electricity and all, do we "need" candles? Or do they just make us happy? And isn't that a good enough reason to buy a whole bunch of them?

Now, I'm not suggesting that Americans are by any means conservative shoppers. But slowly, and certainly generationally, there is a shift toward more thoughtful consuming, a broader awareness of where things come from and how they're made. When it comes to fashion, I'm heartened by developments such as this report, published November 4, 2015: *Climate Change: Implications and Strategies for the Luxury Fashion Sector*. It lays out what fashion companies need to know about the globe's big-

gest problem, as well as actions they can take to address it. The report was published by Kering, the parent company of Gucci, Bottega Veneta, Stella McCartney, Saint Laurent, and Alexander McQueen, among other brands, and BSR, a worldwide nonprofit consultancy that works with companies "to build a just and sustainable world." And Kering, for its part, created a 15-member sustainability department in 2012 and set its own aggressive environmental goals, such as reducing carbon emissions, waste, and water usage by 25 percent and making all collections PVC-free by the end of 2016; phasing out all hazardous chemicals from production by 2020; and ensuring that 100 percent of paper and packaging are sourced from certified sustainably managed forests.

The thing is, 2016 is *this* year. Is it me, or has time started moving faster since the invention of Snapchat? January has traditionally been the month we've published our "make better" issue—our humble take on the venerable "makeover," intended to banish the notion that we need a total overhaul just to be presentable. This year, we thought that if you *really* want to change things, try changing your perspective: Travel, literally and figuratively, to places you've never been before. Whether to Siberia, as Alina Simone did, or all over Shanghai with your whole damn family, like Sandra Tsing Loh, or inside an iceberg by boat, the tale Alice Randall tells in "Shock of the Wild Blue Yonder." Or how about visiting Cuba or Prague outfitted by Jade Frampton, our senior market editor, who has added our great Shops section to her oeuvre? Or what about a journey to the heart of darkness: your own fear, primal variety, as vividly experienced by associate editor Molly Langmuir?

There's one more place we'd love for you to touch down, and that's our Agenda for 2016: eight ideas for making the planet more hospitable for women and girls, put together with the help of the 43 members of our Agenda board—smart, passionate, accomplished women all. My huge thanks to them, and an invitation to you, our readers, to join with ELLE over the next year to take some tangible steps toward reaching a few of our own lofty goals. New year, new you, new *world*.





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# THE AGENDA

 In January 2015, to celebrate this magazine's 30th anniversary, ELLE put together a board of 43 brilliant women—leaders in politics, business, media, technology, and the arts. Over the past year, we've talked with each of them about how to make the world a more hospitable place for women and girls for the next 30 years. On the 2016 Agenda for ELLE: to begin to raise not just awareness but results by building our eight-point plan into programs employing the creative ideas and resources of Agenda board members...and you.

## 1 THE 22-CENT SOLUTION

American women, on average, make 78 cents for every dollar made by American men. African American women earn 64 cents for every dollar made by white men; Latinas, just 54 cents. Of our country's lowest-income jobs, two-thirds are held by women (a ratio at odds with the fact that 49 million children depend at least in part on women's salaries). This disparity starts young: Twenty-five-year-old women typically make \$5,000 less a year than their male counterparts. The Center for American Progress (CAP), which is led by Agenda member Neera Tanden, is lobbying for a cluster of laws to redress this inequity: a minimum wage increase; the Paycheck Fairness Act, which prohibits companies from punishing people who disclose their salaries; and a national paid family and medical leave insurance plan. In your own life, if you deserve a raise, ask for it. At a new job, take the initiative to negotiate your salary. Visit [glassdoor.com](http://glassdoor.com) to see what others in similar positions are making, and ask companies to release diversity data—including wages for women—at [opendiversitydata.org](http://opendiversitydata.org).

## 2 JOIN THE ELLE RUNNER'S CLUB

The United States Senate is just 20 percent women. The House? Nineteen percent. And, of course, with the exception of Olivia Pope's virtual coup d'état, we've never had a female president. The numbers are slightly better in state legislatures, at 24 percent, but at the executive level? There

are only six female governors, down from a high of nine, a number reached just twice in the last decade. The reasons for the gender disparity are many: stodgy, sexist political machines that don't welcome, never mind seek, women; fundraising obstacles (though there's evidence that it's not as difficult as many think); and women's much-discussed reluctance to throw their hat into the ring because of the ugliness of campaigns, because of family responsibilities, or because of an inability to imagine that they're qualified for the job. We can change all of this. But women have got to *run*. We've got to get *you* to run. Running for office is, at its core, a decision: It's not fate or destiny, and you don't need preternatural charm (see: Mitch McConnell) or wit (see: Mitch McConnell) or even good looks (see...) to run; you just need some skills, which are eminently "teachable." To learn how to get women elected—including workshops and online courses designed to help you think about taking on leadership roles in government (and elsewhere)—check out nonpartisan groups such as the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP), All In Together, She Should Run, and Take the Lead. To donate money or time to an XX-er running in 2016, start by visiting CAWP's Election Watch, an up-to-the-minute list of women vying for office across the country; Emily's List is an excellent resource, too, for the Dem side. And anytime you read or hear someone talking sexist trash about a female candidate—whether she's running for the school board or the White House—call it out at [womensmediacenter.com](http://womensmediacenter.com). And look

for our "Runner's Club," a hub on [ELLE.com](http://ELLE.com) where women can learn how to get involved in the political process.

## 3 GO WEST, YOUNG WOMAN!

Silicon Valley is where the action is—the creativity, the power, and, yes, the money. Yet 86 percent of engineers and 74 percent of computer professionals are men. At Facebook, Google, Twitter, and Apple, men account for a whopping 70 percent of the rank-and-file workforce; the statistics for execs and boards of directors are even worse. For women who do work in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math), the picture is brighter: They earn 33 percent more than women in other fields. Unfortunately, only 18 percent of all computer science undergraduate degrees are awarded to women. So how do we stake our turf in the industry that will shape our future more than any other? Last March, President Obama got more than \$240 million in private-sector commitments toward initiatives to inspire girls (and boys in underrepresented groups, like those from low-income homes) to pursue and excel in STEM fields. As Google's VP for public policy and ELLE Agenda member Susan Molinari says, "We need to do a better job illustrating for our girls the many different doors a career in computer science can open: from changing [how] our transportation system works, to exploring our universe, to even ending wars." If you want to join the field, Million Women Mentors will introduce you to a professional who can help guide you wherever you are in your career or education. If you have a computer science background, volunteer for Girls Who Code, the nonprofit founded by Agenda member Reshma Saujani. Or back a female-led tech start-up via AngelList. Considering launching a tech start-up yourself? At February's annual Female Founders Conference in San Francisco—created by Agenda member and Y Combinator cofounder Jessica Livingston—you'll find both inspiration and nuts-and-bolts advice from women who've gotten start-ups off the ground.



And as Livingston has emphatically told us, you'll learn how to negotiate your equity position—which is where the *real* money is.

#### 4 REMEMBER ALZHEIMER'S

Almost two-thirds of Alzheimer's sufferers in this country are women, and according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), it's the fifth-leading cause of death for females (ninth for males). And it's only going to get worse: There are 5.3 million people with Alzheimer's in the United States today; by 2025, there will be 7.1 million, and 13.8 million by 2050. Once women are diagnosed, their health deteriorates more rapidly than does men's. What's more, nearly 60 percent of Alzheimer's caregivers are women, and 26 percent of them end up quitting their jobs. Agenda member Maria Shriver has become one of the most outspoken advocates on the issue, both with her information-packed *The Shriver Report: A Woman's Nation Takes on Alzheimer's*, and an online resource called Wipe Out Alzheimer's, where you can help fund research, keep up with the latest news, and share your story. And let researchers pick your brain: Volunteer to be part of My Brain Movement's efforts. It's free and, if you get in a study, engaging and fun.

#### 5 MAKE ART IMITATE YOUR LIFE

Given that females make up half the population, at least half of what we see in movies and on TV—not to mention in music, in books, and on YouTube—should be by, if not actually *about*, women, right? Alas, women comprised just 17 percent of the directors, executive producers, and writers on the top 250 most profitable films of 2014. Out of that year's top 100 highest-grossing films, only two were directed by a woman, only 12 percent had female protagonists, and just 30 percent of all speaking characters were female, compared to the still-not-enough 40 percent on television. "We're raising kids to see that girls don't take up half the space, because they're not as important as boys," says actor and activist Geena Davis, who's been researching this problem for 10 years through her Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media. Last May, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) asked the federal Equal

Employment Opportunity Commission and other state agencies to investigate Hollywood's hiring discrimination—and it's happening. Groups like the New York City-based Film Fatales and Meryl Streep's Writers Lab, along with Davis's institute, boost female filmmakers' prospects through grants, production support, and mentorship. How can you help? Bust the box office! Go see women-centric films, like the recent *Suffragette* and *Miss You Already* (directed by Catherine Hardwicke and starring Drew Barrymore and Toni Collette), and reserve tickets early for July's all-female remake of *Ghostbusters*. You can also back movies and TV projects created by women—including yours!—on Kickstarter.

#### 6 WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE

We—that is, the inhabitants of planet Earth—are facing a major water crisis. More than 780 million people worldwide are without access to clean water, and according to the United Nations, 6 to 8 million people die each year due to water-related disasters and diseases. In desert regions in Africa, South Asia, and the Middle East, water scarcity is already warping the lives of women and girls, who are disproportionately responsible for water transport and who, because many schools lack proper bathrooms, are often forced to drop out for modesty's sake. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, cofounded by Agenda member Melinda Gates, is tackling this problem head-on by funding research for water-saving solutions and building sanitation systems, particularly in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, where a lack of clean water has led to violent conflicts. The CDC reports that clean water, sanitation, and hygiene could cut the global-disease burden by 9 percent—and save 1.4 million children who die each year of water-related illnesses. On the home front, we're all aware of California's devastating drought: In 2014, the state experienced almost 1,000 more wildfires than the five-year average; water scarcity in the Golden State, which is responsible for almost half the country's produce, will lead to shortages and price hikes, not to mention drive up demand for bottled water. (And how's this for irony? It takes twice as much water to make a plastic bottle than the bottle itself contains.) What can you do? Donate to organizations such as Charity: Water ([charitywater.org](http://charitywater.org)), creator of sustainable water-filter systems for at-

risk countries, and support the Gates Foundation ([gatesfoundation.org](http://gatesfoundation.org)). And spread the word: Eighty-seven percent of those water bottles go *unrecycled*, so they end up floating around the oceans, killing all manner of birds, fish, and marine life. Check the little triangular PRC symbol; it tells you what toxic chemicals are in the plastic. Or just buy reusable, recyclable glass bottles instead (and fill them at the tap), install water-conserving tap fixtures, and drip-proof your home. Visit [eartheasy.com](http://eartheasy.com) to purchase H<sub>2</sub>O-saving appliances.

#### 7 ONE PLUS ONE MORE

This one's easy. We know it's always good to help a sister out. But, according to the *Harvard Business Review*, women are 54 percent less likely than men to have a career sponsor (aka a committed mentor who, as Agenda member and president of STX Digital Kathy Savitt says, will "risk their reputation to get you the job, get you the raise, get you in the door"). Whether you prefer to call yourself a mentor, sponsor, advocate, or just helpful, you can put a dent in that woeful C-suite stat—only 19 percent of the board seats of S&P 500 companies, and a mere 4 percent of the CEO spots, are held by women—by sharing your expertise or introducing a female colleague to others in your world. The next time you're going to a work-related dinner, lunch, seminar, or awards ceremony, bring along a junior colleague. And if you're the one in the market for a booster, ask a senior colleague for help in workshopping ideas—and if you could join her at that presentation you're helping her build! You may know the content; it's the contacts you're after.

#### 8 SUPPORT PLANNED PARENTHOOD

Planned Parenthood provides health care to more than 5 million women and men every year. Services include Pap tests (400,000 annually), breast exams (500,000), and STD tests and treatments (nearly 4.5 million). And each year, more than 3.5 million women get contraception and health advice through the organization to help them—you guessed it—plan parenthood! When it comes to government funding for Planned Parenthood, none of which, by law, can be used for the abortions Planned Parenthood provides (328,000 in 2014), make sure your elected representatives are representing you. •



THE  
MIND-OPENING,  
PERCEPTION-  
BUSTING,  
NEW-VIEW-NEW-YOU  
SEE THE WORLD  
SPECTACULAR!

# THE SOUL SEARCHERS

As we pack our bags and embark upon the journey—yes, we said it, the journey—that is 2016, the editors of ELLE present a challenge: This year, let's worry less about changing ourselves and more about changing our view. Let's go *there*—literally. We're not saying you have to ship off to Siberia, though one of our writers did just that. Even exploring an undiscovered (to you) neighborhood in your own city can teach you something about yourself, your own history, and, critically, about someone else you'd otherwise have missed. Here, women recall the far-flung spots—from steamy Turkish baths to chillingly gorgeous Chilean icebergs—that altered their moods, freed their minds, and rerouted their lives.

ARIZONA

## LOVE IN THE DESERT

BY RIVKA GALCHEN

This fall I went to the Petrified Forest National Park in northeastern Arizona with my two-year-old daughter. I'd been there before, more than 30 years ago, with my own mother. The Petrified Forest is the kind of place where you might run out of gas before you reach the next service station, where you might buy a souvenir quartz. Often, from a distance, the fossilized trees strewn throughout the park look like tree trunks that have fallen over and are disintegrating naturally, but then, upon closer inspection, the logs appear enchanted, the 200-million-year-old organic matter now just a tracing within the colored stone. It is a gorgeous and strange vision. I have a strong memory

of a small rock-collection box from my childhood, something bought, I think, from a souvenir shop at the Petrified Forest; the box had 12 small samples of rock glued inside, and my favorite—more beloved even than the glittery pyrite that was labeled *fool's gold*, or the flaky, silvery mica that resembled a glamorous cake decoration—was the small piece of petrified wood. It looked like wood, but didn't feel like wood; the thrill of touching it never diminished.

My daughter and I stepped out of the car, into the dusty parking lot, and we made our way into the Information Souvenirs Maps shop, where for sale there were Navajo blankets, cat's-eye marbles, Painted Desert key chains, trilobite fossils, beaded moccasins, plush lizards, Historic Route 66 stickers. She was ecstatic and gasping, running around the store so full of things that were shiny and things that were soft and things that

**READY, SET, GO!** **WHEN:** In September and October, to avoid peak summer tourism. **STAY HERE:** Amangiri, just over the Utah border in Canyon Point, is a trip-of-a-lifetime luxury retreat two hours north of the Grand Canyon and three and a half hours from the Painted Desert. [aman.com](http://aman.com). **WORTH THE TRIP:** Park rangers allow only a few people at a time to visit the Wave, the breathtaking, pumpkin-orange swirl of sandstone in Coyote Buttes created by 190-million-year-old calcified Navajo sand dunes. Be one of those people: Reserve a permit at [blm.gov](http://blm.gov).

Nadine Fovner/Gallery Stock





# Chloé

made a special sound when you shook them; we stayed for a half an hour. In the end, we got a map, and my daughter fell asleep on the scenic drive that followed. I know this is not necessarily the norm and certainly not requisite, but when I am with my daughter, there is always a basement of happiness—even if my surface mood is one of anxiety, or fatigue, or longing for more space to read, think, work—and that afternoon this struck me as a kind of inherited characteristic.

Why, of all the trinkets and stuffies and collectibles of childhood, did that little piece of petrified wood so stand out in my memory? When you drive through the Petrified Forest, you see portions of the Painted Desert, a sublime landscape that among other things humbles your sense of your ability to describe purples and reds. When I was there with my mom, I remember her saying that she loved the desert, that the desert was her favorite landscape, that for her the desert was holy. These all might be relatively unmemorable comments if they weren't made by my mom, but she almost never expressed *any* sort of preference, any sort of desire. Maybe she'd occasionally admire the pattern of a shirt in a store, but then she wouldn't buy it for herself. When my brother and I would ask her what she wanted for her birthday, she'd tell us that she didn't want anything, and if we pressed her further, she'd say that it might be useful to have some Kleenex for the house, or some paper towels. We had these things. I remember asking her once if she liked someone she worked with, and she answered, "What does it matter whether I like him or not? He's just someone I need to get along with for work." Her simple expression of love for the desert, above all other landscapes, stayed with me, like a clue held in that little piece of petrified wood.

Of course my mother had a strong preference all along, which was simply the classic maternal preference for what made the people around her happy. Why were we in a cluttered gift shop full of nothing any adult could ever want? I used to feel bad, thinking that my mother had forsaken her own happiness to try to make the rest of us happy; and she had done that, to some extent. But being with my daughter, in the desert, it was a relief—and a happiness of my own—to recognize that she often must have been happy as well, just driving, with her children in the backseat. ●



♥ SHANGHAI, CHINA

## SUPER POD PEOPLE

BY SANDRA TSING LOH

The family trips of my childhood were legendary—but not necessarily in a good way. My German mother loved adventures; my Chinese father was cheap; the result was actual danger. My mother led our Loh family “pod” of bargain-travel soldiers into snow blindness (Peru), gunfire (Ireland), and, yes, a terrorist attack (Ethiopia). This happens when you stay at one-star hotels and trade Western tourist coaches for clattering local fourth-class buses, often with chickens. Plus, my parents were always violently arguing. Fun, fun, fun!

My older sister, Tatjana, has since replaced our late mother as pod leader. Loh family travel, version 2.0, includes such upgrades as realistic budgets, months of research, and close attention to U.S. Government Travel Warnings, so that the grandchildren aren't venturing into war zones. On the occasion of a photography opening of hers in Shanghai, Tatjana decided to take our now 89-year-old father back to China. The rest of the clan would come, too, divided into mini-pods. My frail dad would be shepherded by his 20-years-younger Chinese wife—they were a pod. Three of the five grandchildren, ages 9 to 15, were my brother's, so they were a pod. Two were mine; thus, my pod. Together, we were a Super Loh Pod.

Stepping into Grandpa's old wooden house in the gladed, elegant, almost Parisian boulevards of the French Concession district of Shanghai was a true Amy Tan moment. Grandpa began weeping

under the lintel, then all the Lohs, three generations, were weeping—from white-haired to dark-haired to the quarter-Chinese dirty blondes.

What a surprising, beautiful turn to the Loh travel legacy. I found myself missing my mother, yet relieved at the lack of conflict (not entirely her fault; my father had mellowed). We then eagerly explored the windy stairs and rickety rooms with not just nostalgia but delight (ceilings so low!... what quaint furniture!... the lovely smell of sizzling sesame oil!). Afterward we watched locals do tai chi in the park while enjoying tasty street food of steaming dumplings and *bao* (my thrifty sister had cleverly packed Tupperwares for easy portability). When Grandpa was moving too slowly, the Super Pod bought him a wheelchair. When descending stairs, the males coordinated a fireman's carry.

“But where's Alice?” Traversing the chaos of Shanghai, we'd linked arms to daisy-chain the children—but no one had thought to hang onto our stepmom. And now the next pod collapsed. Because I had refused to continue carrying my younger daughter, she brattily sat down on the curb. Not even an hours-old *bao* in a sweaty Tupperware could get her moving. I felt her pain; all I wanted was a swift cab ride to an icy Cosmopolitan.

Helped by another modern tool her predecessor lacked, our new pod leader wielded her Visa card and saved the day. Ice cream, dinner at an air-conditioned restaurant, and discreet telephone calls to missing persons followed. Thankfully, we did find Grandma, although for Loh family travel, version 3.0, would a simple Disney cruise be possible? When you wish upon a star. ●

**READY, SET, GO!** **DOWNLOAD:** Pleco, a Chinese-language app with optical character recognition: Just scan a menu with your iPhone, and all will be revealed. **PEACE OUT:** At Yuyuan Garden, a five-acre plot that's the only fully restored classical Chinese garden in the city. Conceived in 1559, it dates back to the Ming Dynasty. **TRY IT:** China Cycle Tours offers guided cycling tours every day in the old French Concession district. [chinacycletours.com](http://chinacycletours.com). **WORTH THE TRIP:** Mr. and Mrs. Bund restaurant, for the best views of the city and French chef Paul Pairet's 200-plus-item menu, featuring frogs' legs, sole meunière, and tarte tatin served until 2 A.M.

Martin Puddy/Getty Images



KILIS, TURKEY

# A STEAMY PEACE

BY DAWN MACKEN

In the dark Turkish bathhouse, the attendant gestured for me to undress. The air was heavy with moisture; the warren of rooms that stretched for nearly a block derelict from neglect and centuries of wear. I stripped down slowly, unsure about what I'd find here, certain that the staff could see through me, exposed now in every sense. That they could feel my anger and sorrow, too, over what had happened to my grandfather in this town, in a *hamam* like this one, nearly a hundred years ago.

I was dusty from weeks of travel, but it was nothing compared to my grandfather's condition when he'd arrived in Kilis to take a bath—caked in filth from living in a nearby internment camp, along with tens of thousands of other starving Armenians. “Gradually, the hunger and the misery got much worse,” he wrote matter-of-factly in a notebook. “As the result of illnesses, two hundred people a day died.”

Coming to this region and facing my family's past would be cleansing, I'd hoped. But it also fulfilled a pledge I'd made to my mother to tell her father's story. This bathhouse was just one stop of many, as I retraced my grandfather's 1,000-mile odyssey—from Istanbul to eastern Syria, I followed his words. The year before, my family had discovered a trove of my grandfather's journals; they detailed the roundup of his family and other Christian Armenians by the Ottoman government in a genocidal campaign that claimed more than a million lives, and nearly my grandfather's. I took this trip—and stopped every place he'd gone—to better understand what he endured, and why the Turkish government still denies that ethnic cleansing occurred.

I stood in the dressing room, without a towel. I felt like a dumb foreigner, expecting to find stacks of them folded on shelves. The frustrated attendant unearthed one. I didn't have any shampoo either, and this time she just shrugged before leading me into a grand, domed room with a skylight that illuminated the cavernous bathing areas. It was then I realized that both my grandfather and I had come to a *hamam* without anything in hand.

In 1915, he'd risked his life to wash, and chronicled his ordeal in his notebook. He'd sneaked past guards in his encampment and crossed a mountain. After procuring some soap in the bathhouse, he lathered up and watched the dirt trail off his emaciated body, studded with bones. “We had hardly wetted ourselves and washed our hair and faces when the owner of the bath walked in, stick in hand,” he wrote. The Turkish proprietor had discovered my grandfather and his friends were Armenian. “Infidel pigs!” he shrieked, and beat them. “You soiled my bath!”

In front of a faucet now, I lowered down. The attendant filled a decorative bowl with warm water and tipped it over my head, the water rushing over my face. Then she repeated the motion before leaving me on my own. Squatting there without soap or shampoo, I wasn't sure how the different spigots worked, and turned them around and around, unable to find the right temperature or pressure. Then I noticed two naked women nearby, washing their hair.

One addressed me in Turkish. “I don't understand,” I replied in English.

“Where you from?” the other asked in broken English.

“America.”

“As I retraced my grandfather's 1,000-mile odyssey—from Istanbul to eastern Syria—I followed his words.”

They looked at me expectantly, which seemed to happen regularly in this part of the world; people could see in my complexion, my bone structure, my eyes—who knows what all?—the suggestion of my Middle Eastern ancestry, and they wanted to know more. But I hesitated, remembering the “infidel pigs” and the continuing tension over the so-called Armenian holocaust.

“I'm Armenian,” I said finally, and named my family's hometown.

“Ah,” they said, and then smiled wide. They both scooted toward me. Squirting some shampoo in their hands, they began to wash my long hair, as tenderly as my mother used to do. And then they began to sing—a lovely melody, the sound rising high, bouncing off the ceiling like light. ●





📍 CAPE HORN, CHILE

# SHOCK OF THE WILD BLUE YONDER

BY ALICE RANDALL

For a long time I hated “wild travel.” I liked to be prepared.

In the 1990s, southern Chile was as far as I could get from Nashville and be back in seven days. Back then I was a single mother, and what I call wild travel—last-minute, no-research, no-reservation pleasure trips—typically happened when a business trip, usually related to screen-writing, fell through, and I had already arranged child care.

I have a wild travel companion: Mimi, my daughter’s godmother, my best friend. People are alternately perplexed and intrigued by the presence of a black woman in plain black clothes and a Japanese woman in richly hued attire of complex construction. Sometimes our act opens doors better than a passport. Chile was no exception: It got us our own dinghy.

After flights from Nashville to Miami, Miami to Santiago, and Santiago to Punta Arenas, we boarded a ship and cruised into the Chilean fjords around Cape Horn. We heard a glacier calving; I was prepared for that. I had read about that sound—and it was almost as amazing as promised. Then we came upon an iceberg—it was just like in the movies.

A group of rather charming Spanish-speaking men negotiated to have a Zodiac boat take them out to the iceberg. The plan was to venture onto the frozen deep with cocktail glasses and scotch, hack off a bit of the iceberg, then sip the scotch over iceberg ice while touching the iceberg with one hand. We were invited to join their “Scotch on the Rocks” party but politely declined.

We didn’t want to attack the thing. Or drink it. We wanted to peer inside, if there was an inside to see. Or maybe the thing was solid. We didn’t know. But we wanted to know. And we wanted quiet for our close encounter.

A Chilean gentleman who was working as a deckhand had been smiling at us; our smiles in return (and a little cash) inspired him to commandeer another dinghy and paddle just the two of us out to the iceberg.

It was not easy jumping from ship to dinghy in bulky clothes. With every yard we traveled across the waves some new fear rose in me. We would be snagged on a part of the iceberg we couldn’t see, and our boat would be punctured. One of the icebergs would calve underwater, and a huge chunk of ice would emerge from the deep. All my scenarios ended with *and then we will drown*.

The inside of an iceberg looks like the nave of a giant cathedral of blue ice. And I have lived to tell you. I did not drown. The walls soar and float. The space appears

“The outside of an iceberg looks chiseled by water, wind, and time; the inside is something else. **Something you haven’t seen in 100 books or 1,000 movies.** ‘Hand of God beautiful,’ I called it.”

intentionally and expressively carved.

The outside of an iceberg looks chiseled by water, wind, and time; the inside is something else. Something you haven’t seen in 100 books or 1,000 movies. Something worth getting off the big, safe boat and out in the rubber dinghy to see. “Hand of God beautiful,” I called it. Right out loud.

But what it really was, for me, was unexpected. I was elated by the shock of beauty unforetold. Before I saw the Grand Canyon, I had read about it and heard so much talk. Had clippings. Ditto the Alps. Mount Fuji. The South China Sea. So many said-to-be-glorious and glorious-enough points on the globe.

The inside of an iceberg was a delight for which I was not prepared. A pleasure that had not been foreshadowed. It remains the most beautiful place I have seen on earth.

Sometimes the trick of travel is to not know before you go. ●

**READY, SET, GO!** **LOCAL FLAVOR:** Combat altitude sickness with coca leaves, chewed or brewed in tea. **STAY HERE:** The Singular Patagonia, a 1915 shipping plant just outside Puerto Natales with its original brickwork and architecture intact, now a luxury hotel overlooking the Fjord of Last Hope Sound and the Andes Mountains. **WORTH THE TRIP:** Book a two-and-a-half-hour boat ride from Punta Arenas to hike Isla Magdalena, an island in the Straits of Magellan where Magellan penguins breed (NB: chicks hatch in November, migrate in March). Boat trips are available from December through February.

Naphat Photography/Getty Images/Flickr RF



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HONG KONG, CHINA

# ROOM WITH A VIEW

BY KATE DOYLE HOOPER

I did not expect Hong Kong to reach into my chest, grab hold of my heart, and not let go, haunting my dreams and filling me with a near-constant craving for more. I couldn't have prepared myself for the sight of Victoria Harbour filling the windowed wall of my hotel room, or how that view would trigger happy tears at nightfall and again at dawn, bewitched as I was by the round-the-clock water ballet of tugboats, ferries, speedboats, junks, tankers, cruise liners, and helicopters whizzing about the megabillion-dollar beehive that is Hong Kong. I couldn't have anticipated the aura of bygone British Empire glamour that enveloped me each time I stepped onto the 118-year-old Star Ferry or the It's-a-Small-World sense of communion I felt with thousands of office workers as we scurried en masse across the city's "sky bridges" at day's end. Never could I have guessed that this seen-it-all city girl and lifelong New Yorker on her first trip to the East would find herself so moved on the streets of this resplendently cutting-edge city, falling-down-drunk with joy, utterly and completely besotted with a place she'd always wrongly assumed was much like her own, only with a much bigger Chinatown.

For years, I'd kept China on the back burner. It was too large. There were too many people, too many impenetrable languages, and a political system I was happy to view from a distance. For me, it was all Europe, all the time. I could get there quickly; it had languages I could manage, food I loved; and it was home to the (preferably minimalist) fashionista aesthetic my eyes understood. For me, China, and more specifically Hong Kong, had none of that. There was that pesky 16-hour flight, food I'd have difficulty identifying, much less ordering, and languages I could only massacre. But when a trip suddenly materialized, it seemed the universe was telling me to let go of my reservations and book some new ones (preferably with a view: the Renaissance, 24th floor) and head east.

Stepping into the Technicolor fantasia of Asia for the first time knocked the gray, brown, black, and blue memories of the New York-London-Paris-Milan axis right out of my head. In those first electrifying moments in Hong Kong,

the city's sheer profusion of color swept me up in a tidal wave of tones—bold, brilliant, gleaming, at times garish, but unapologetic, oddly elegant, and utterly, completely, and joyously out of control. My eyes worked hard to absorb the visual chaos, but my soul welcomed it, minimalism be damned (apologies, Phoebe Philo). Walking the streets, I found no escape from the "more is more is more" ethos. Nor was I looking for one. I was in deep, high on the explosion of color, eager for more, never wanting the party to end. Hong Kong was happy to oblige, with tumbledown buildings in Pepto-Bismol pink, lemon yellow, Twitter blue, and Crayola orange, alongside the sleek silver and gold skyscrapers that crept up the town's steep slopes. Down below were outdoor food markets with vegetables in 50 shades of green—from seafoam to emerald—cheek by jowl with blood-red animal parts dangling from hooks and

"Stepping into the Technicolor fantasia of Asia for the first time knocked the gray, brown, black, and blue memories of the New York-London-Paris-Milan axis right out of my head."

pink, peach, silver, and blue-hued fish splayed out on ice. Overhead loomed a labyrinth of signs—signs upon signs, stacked six stories high, layered one over another, strung across the streets and boulevards, a massive aerial crazy quilt of commerce, hawking businesses with something to sell and marking the spots of shops long gone. As the train-to-the-plane that would bring me home pulled Hong Kong further from view, I cried once more—this time for having to say good-bye. ●

**READY, SET, GO!** **GETTING AROUND:** Hong Kong's efficient Mass Transit Railway features maps and signs in English and Chinese. Taking a taxi? Write down your destination in Chinese before you jump in. **STAY HERE:** The Pottinger, a 68-room boutique hotel located in a historic district in the bustling Central neighborhood. [thepottinger.com](http://thepottinger.com). **FASHION FIX:** Skip the megamalls. Find burgeoning local designers at shopping centers Rise (5-11 Granville Circuit, Tsim Sha Tsui) and Island Beverley (1 Great George Street, Causeway Bay). **WORTH THE TRIP:** Hop a 30-minute boat ride from central Hong Kong to hike the 2.5 miles across Lamma Island for gorgeous views, beaches, and a delicious endpoint: Rainbow Seafood for dinner.



Martin Puddy/Getty Images



📍 SPAIN, ITALY, FRANCE

# THREE MEN, 19 CITIES, 30 DAYS

BY AMANDA FORTINI

I left the first man in Nice, at the base of the 213 steps leading up to the Colline du Château—Castle Hill, in English. We'd just spent three weeks backpacking through Spain, three weeks of sightseeing, sex, and whiskey *con* Coca-Colas, but when I turned to walk away from him that day, I knew in my gut our fun was over. "You go ahead," I told him, eyeing the straight vertical climb up the stone wall, his preferred route since the elevator went only three-quarters of the way. "I'll meet you at the hostel." There isn't a castle up there anyway, I harrumphed to myself, only the crumbling ruins of one. There was, however, a panoramic view of the harbor and the Riviera glittering like a diamond necklace. My companion wanted to see it.

In the preceding weeks, we'd traveled from Madrid to Toledo, Córdoba, Seville, Granada, Ronda, Málaga, Marbella, then back up to Barcelona. We'd gone to bullfights and cathedrals and museums, sunbathed topless at beaches (or I did, anyway), and watched the moon rise from open-air bars. In Granada, we'd toured every inch of the Alhambra's sprawling Moorish splendor. In Barcelona, we'd ascended the winding, snail-like towers of the Sagrada Família.

In Ronda, we'd picked our way down almost 300 steps from the Casa del Rey Moro to a fourteenth-century water mine at the bottom of a gorge. By the time we reached Nice, I felt like I'd climbed every goddamned set of stairs in Europe. Forget Myers-Briggs; I have a quicker test for couples: Are you always, unwaveringly, a stair person, or do you sometimes break down and take the elevator?

"You don't like adventure," my travel companion said, his athletic calf muscles clenching like fists as he turned to start his solo climb. It was the kind of meanspirited, airily diagnostic pronouncement one would issue to a sibling, a lover you'd begun to feel contempt for, or someone with whom you'd been sharing an upper train bunk for too many nights in a row. We were two out of three, and arguing like brother and sister: over finding ants in the bed of the Seville pensione, about the bowl of chocolate ice cream I'd cavalierly ordered from room service in Marbella. "You're no fun," he called back, in case I hadn't heard him the first time.

He was a casual college boyfriend, a sweet, loping Texas kid from a comfortable upper-middle-class family to my intense Midwestern striver. I'd won a \$7,500 academic prize for my thesis, and, on a lark, decided to use

some of it to travel with him. Our bodies fit together nicely—I loved his tawny, smooth skin and strong hands—but sex and our alma mater, from which we'd graduated three weeks prior, were pretty much all we had in common. We were careful to avoid acknowledging this. I'd half-hoped this trip might clarify what we had not been able to determine for ourselves in the course of eight months together. But I suspected he wasn't quite as ambivalent as I was: He wanted me to meet his father, who was soon to arrive in France on a business trip.

There, at the bottom of those steps, I knew I'd never meet his dad, that it would be pointless and disingenuous for me to do so. I made up a story that involved a girlfriend I wanted to see in Paris. After that, I remember sitting in an outdoor café, listlessly eating a thin, salty fish soup that might as well have been gruel, while the sky dimmed to an inky black and tourists shouted around me in a cacophony of foreign languages. I thought I would feel euphoric and vindicated—free!—but instead I just felt desolate and awful, like I was wearing a wet bathing suit on a warm, sunny day that had suddenly gone cold.

How fortuitous, then, that the great love of my 22 years happened to be in Milan, a mere eight hours by train from Nice. He was there setting up an office for an investment bank. This was the boyfriend with whom I'd been giddily in love for the first time in my adult life. He had a sharp, practical intelligence and was driven to an intoxicating, if sometimes intimidating, degree. When he'd broken up with me by phone the previous fall, saying he needed to "focus on his career," he'd left me with the emotional DTs: For meals, I stood storklike at the kitchen counter spooning ice cream from the pint. At night I read until the wee hours—I remember poring over Elizabeth Wurtzel's *Bitch*, underlining the names of women I wanted to emulate—and called the Psychic Friends Network to ask the disembodied voice on the other end if there was a chance that he and I might get back together. Someday? Maybe? If the stars aligned? Texas guy had been a diversion, a Vicodin in human form.

## ASSIGNATION KIT

Planning an on-the-road seduction? ELLE executive beauty editor (and resident jet-setter) April Long has you covered. **8G GREENS:** Down these effervescent veggie powder packets before landing to counteract plane "food." **TATCHA ABURATORIGAMI JAPANESE BEAUTY PAPERS:** Desert-dry cabin air puts oil glands into overdrive. A quick tap with these geisha-inspired blotting papers gives skin a nice matte finish with just enough glow. **TATA HARPER HYDRATING FLORAL ESSENCE:** To the probable annoyance of fellow passengers, I mist my face repeatedly throughout the flight with this moisturizing, pretty-smelling spray. **LA MER THE CONCENTRATE:** There is no damage on earth—or 40,000 feet above it—that The Concentrate can't undo: I pat it on (sparingly—the stuff is like liquid gold) from takeoff to landing. **BOBBI BROWN CORRECTOR:** Camouflages excess under-eye baggage and cleans up any mascara that might have migrated midflight.

Stylender/Gallery Stock



Back in Nice, I did what we did before cell phones: I bought a phone card and called my ex's New York office from a pay phone. His secretary gave me the number of his hotel. "Come meet me in Milan," he said. We had unfinished business; we both knew it. I was on a train the next morning.

The next three days in Milan were a blur of sensual pleasures. A fairy-tale sleep in the high-thread-count bed at the five-star Principe di Savoia—the draperied, mahogany, Art Deco wonderland his employer was paying for, and easily the fanciest hotel I'd ever set foot in. A transcendent dinner of gnocchi and red sauce in a restaurant tucked in the cozy downstairs of the proprietress's home. The fragrant, strong coffee that cleansed our palates after boozy meals of tannic red wine, and then woke us up again in the morning. The nearly unbearable sweetness of sex: We were still so in love.

Yet it was all tinged with sadness as well. He'd long ago told me that he wouldn't make room for a relationship in his blinkered, cubicle-bound existence. But I didn't want to marry him! I wasn't in a rush to acquire a husband or children or the trappings of a domestic life. To put it in cultural perspective: I graduated from college the year after *Ally McBeal* became a cause célèbre and the same week *Sex and the City* first aired. I simply wanted someone with whom I could talk and laugh—and I wanted to sleep with him for the rest of my life. I needed to make him understand this.

On the third morning, as he stood in the bathroom, naked after sex, I got up from the bed, pulled on some underpants, positioned myself casually in the doorframe, and made the predictable but perpetually unwise move of initiating a "discussion." I soliloquized about my feelings, offering up all the platitudes of love. My Shakespearean speech was met with silence, followed by a long, loud flush.

"Did you know," he said, "that this bathroom has a bidet?" I'd just excavated my soul for him, and he was talking about the bidet. But I wasn't going to protest. I was too proud for that. In silence, I gathered up my dignity along with my clothes and offered a vague excuse about why I needed to leave. We shared a late lunch in a nearby courtyard, where I ate the platonically ideal of a ham-and-cheese panini—I think about it to this day—and then rolled my tiny suitcase to a cabstand. I wasn't sure where I was headed.

I took a train to Paris, a city I knew

📍 SIBERIA, RUSSIA

## DESTINATION UNKNOWN

BY ALINA SIMONE

Siberia was not my first choice. When I imagined returning to the motherland, I pictured St. Petersburg, the city of my mother's birth. I wanted onion-dome churches and the Hermitage, not Gulags and ice.

I was going to Russia against my parents' wishes. We had fled the Soviet Union as political refugees when I was a baby, and they had devoted the subsequent 27 years to keeping me safe, cocooning me in suburban Lexington, Massachusetts, a town so G-rated, it seemed like people had kids before even having sex. From there, it was on to college...seven miles away. At the same university where my father worked.

Finally, though, I rebelled, finding a job with an alternative-to-the-Peace-Corps program that would send me to the one place they forbade me to go. The hitch? The only region the program covered was Chita: a remote and heavily militarized part of eastern Siberia near the borders of China and Mongolia. Until 1991, the city of Chita was "closed," off-limits even to most Russians. You couldn't find it on any map. My organization printed up bumper stickers that said: "Do you know where Chita is? I do!" I gave one to my parents.

No one laughed.

They tried to scare me. Russia is an evil and immoral country, they explained. One wrong move and—flop!—I'd end up tethered to a plasma-siphoning machine in some Moscow gangster's basement. But I held firm. Well, sort of: I was taking my law-school applications with me. Law school being the final destination my mother had charted for me. The promise of a comfortable income being the ultimate safety net.

After a 24-hour Trans-Siberian Express train ride from Irkutsk, then the closest city with an airport, I stepped off the platform and into what felt like a black-and-white movie, all billowing steam, dark silhouettes, and klieg lights. Thus began my emancipation.

Mainly, my job was to find places to teach English, but I also needed to learn everything I could about Chita so I could debrief the hapless Americans applying to our soon-to-be-broke program. I wandered the streets for hours,

discovering that behind the grim Soviet facade (1970s concrete buildings, tanks on pedestals, unsmiling Lenin statues) were streets lined with beautiful nineteenth-century buildings and traditional log cottages. I met a kid who could spit Tupac better than anyone back in Brooklyn and who, when I asked him to take me to his favorite part of town, brought me to the electronics section of the local flea market.

I visited high schools in distant Buryat villages (Buryats are ethnically Mongolian Russians), where I threw back vodka with Buddhist principals and learned to use an outhouse in sub-zero weather. I visited rural temples and hiked a sacred mountain. By day, my world was expanding at warp speed, but my nights all ended with me staring down the same question: Why do you want to go to law school?

As my three weeks in Chita dwindled, all my walks seemed to end at the train station. I didn't want to go to law school, but I had no other destination in mind. The one thought my mind kept circling around was this: Wouldn't it be wonderful to get paid just to be yourself?

Sometimes an inchoate goal is better than a definite one, even if it leads you to a place that's not on any map. I've been an indie-rock singer, a journalist, and a filmmaker. I can't say I've arrived yet, but my law-school applications stayed behind, in my dorm room at the Chita State Pedagogical University. So never turn down a trip to the Gulag; mine set me free. ●



# OM BASE

Whether your 2016 goals involve slimming down, defying gravity, getting more shut-eye, or simply carving out a bit more me-time, there's an ELLE-approved spa to help get you there



## PURGE YOUR TOXINS

AMANSALA  
TULUM, MEXICO

At Amansala, the water is Technicolor turquoise, the sand plush enough to sleep on, the air tinged with the scent of jungle flowers—and these are only a few of the reasons why this tranquil oasis is the ideal spot for a major mind-body reboot. Building on the success of the resort's Bikini Bootcamp fitness retreat (a fave of cool-girl celebs Sienna Miller and Drew Barrymore), the new six-day Destination Detox program includes a two-day raw-food cleanse with fruit-and-veggie-centric meals thereafter, daily yoga and meditation, a gamut of body-sculpting classes, nutritionist consultations, and decadent spa treatments. **DON'T MISS:** Perhaps the area's most awe-inspiring natural wonders are the cenotes—underwater caves where you can safely swim, featuring stalagmites and jarringly gorgeous schools of fish. *From \$200 per night*



## KICK AN AMBIEN HABIT SIX SENSES

DOURO, PORTUGAL

This dreamy locale couldn't be better equipped for overstressed insomniacs hoping to catch some z's without popping pills. Between the resort's 3- to 14-night Yogic Sleep retreats, which combine gentle and meditative yoga practices with ultrarelaxing spa treatments; the new Sleep With Six Senses Program, which involves a consultation with a "sleep ambassador" to determine your perfect pillow and an array of in-room soporific swag (custom aromatherapy, blackout curtains, a "worry journal" into which you can scribble your thoughts before hitting the sack); and the extensive vino selection in the former manor house's Wine Library, quality repose is practically guaranteed. **DON'T MISS:** For the ultimate in quiet time, settle into one of the cocoonlike meditation nests—equipped with cozy blankets and Deepak Chopra-loaded iPods—scattered about the UNESCO heritage site's lush forest. *From \$270 per night*

## LOSE FIVE POUNDS

THE RANCH AT LIVE OAK

MALIBU, CALIFORNIA

A stay at The Ranch—a 16-cottage retreat set in the picturesque Santa Monica mountains—is a game of pluses and minuses. Fashion insiders and celebs such as Minka Kelly and Lea Michele have flocked to the locale's famously grueling seven-day program since it debuted five years ago, and in that time—according to The Ranch's own calculations—guests have collectively hiked more than 300,000 miles, shed an average of 3 percent of their body weight (one woman dropped 13.4 pounds inside of a week), and lowered their cholesterol by between 13 and 15 percent. **DON'T MISS:** The Ranch 4.0 is an abbreviated Thursday-to-Monday version of the weeklong classic, but you're still getting the goods: four hours daily of mountain hiking, core- and ab-focused workouts, yoga sessions, afternoon massages, and tasty vegetarian cuisine (limited to 1,400 calories a day). Oh, and complete peace: Phones and computers are verboten. *From \$4,100 for four nights*



From top: Amansala; Six Senses Hotels Resorts Spas; The Ranch at Live Oak





## BE (LUXURIOUSLY) REBORN

THE RITZ-CARLTON SPA ♡ BALI

A green-juice detox is one thing, but if you're looking for a truly deep cleanse, the Ritz-Carlton's Soul Purification Ritual might be just the thing. The traditional Hindu ceremony takes place at dawn on the resort's white beaches, where a Balinese priest delivers blessings while the guest's hands, feet, face, and mouth are rinsed with holy water, a practice believed to cleanse "spiritual impurities" and protect from bad juju.

**DON'T MISS:** The spa's decadent Iridescent Delight treatment, which involves a luminizing pearl-polish scrub, a body wrap, and a massage with pearl extract-infused oil. *From \$480 per night*



## GET OVER A BREAKUP

TIERRA SANTA HEALING HOUSE, FAENA HOTEL ♡ MIAMI

Dance away the heartache at a South Beach club, then detox at this South American-inspired temple of well-being. Book one of the shaman-influenced healing rituals (must-try: Tree of Life Vibrations, a sound bath plus massage performed on a bed of heated sand, during which sore muscles are treated with Brazilian rose stones while the mind is soothed with "singing" bowls) that incorporate rejuvenating elements such as herbal indigo poultices and pressure point-targeting lapis lazuli, and you may just forget about the ex who drove you there.

**DON'T MISS:** Embark on a self-guided tour through the wet spa, which includes a range of powerful showers, an authentic hammam, an herbal aromatherapy steam room, a multitiered sauna, and an ice fountain. *From \$745 per night*



## REV UP YOUR RESVERATROL

THE WINE SPA, VIÑA VIK ♡ CHILE

Wellness through wine? That's essentially the motto at this vineyard-adjacent holistic spa two hours outside of Santiago, where polyphenol- and resveratrol-rich grapes are harvested both for therapeutic purposes—the Signature Massage involves a wine bath and a grapeseed-oil massage—and for imbibing, perhaps while contemplating the beauty of the surroundings from the edge of the hilltop infinity pool, which offers expansive views of the verdant Millahue Valley and lake below.

**DON'T MISS:** Take a day trip to the black-sand beaches of the nearby village Pichilemu, or just stay put and marvel at the hotel's striking collection of contemporary South American art. *From \$1,200, all-inclusive*



## BANISH CELLULITE

SISLEY SPA, HOTEL CHRISTOPHER ♡ ST. BARTH

This sophisticated hideaway has undergone a major reno, including the addition of a luxe, open-air Sisley Spa, perched dramatically above the crashing surf. Perhaps thanks to the see-and-be-seen scene on this balmy Caribbean isle, the spa offers a panoply of therapies that beautify from the neck down, such as the 1, 2, 3 Slimming Phyto-Aromatic Body Treatment, a three-day de-dimpling program involving lower-body exfoliation and "intense massage" (on the menu: kneading, twisting, and deep-tissue vacuum techniques) to increase lymphatic drainage and help diminish deep-set cellulite.

**DON'T MISS:** Once your bod has been pummeled into (taut, smooth) submission, treat your face to the Replumping Youth Facial With Rose, which amps up radiance with Sisley's oh-so-heavenly Black Rose Oil. *From \$450 per night*



## GET AN INSTA-FACELIFT—SANS NEEDLES

JOANNA CZECH SPA ♡ DALLAS

At celebrity facialist Joanna Czech's recently opened namesake spa, every detail is ultraluxe, from the Brunello Cucinelli cashmere blankets, to the Biologique Recherche skin-analyzer gadget that helps Czech customize her facials, to the Niclas Castello art-installation fire extinguisher in the bathroom.

**DON'T MISS:** Clients Kate Winslet and Uma Thurman swear by Czech's signature sculpting facials: By pairing ultrasound and masterful massage techniques with LED light therapy (plus the occasional sapphire peel), she's able to make complexions look instantly taut and firm—and a few years younger. *Treatments start at \$300*



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# FASHION

## FIRST LOOK

You think you've got your travel essentials down—but does your look match your luggage? At his spring 2016 show, Gucci's Alessandro Michele raised the bar with this painterly pairing

PHOTOGRAPHED  
BY DAN SMITH



*Printed-canvas coat with suede belt, leather suitcase, prices on request, silk scarf, \$450, leather pumps, \$870, all, GUCCI, at select Gucci stores nationwide. Gold bracelet, CARTIER, \$3,150. Gold-plated silver ring, MARIA BLACK, \$265. For details, see Shopping Guide.*

Styled by Yashua Simmons (hair) by Kayla Michele at Streeters for Wella Professionals; makeup by Asami Matsuda at Artist for Chanel; manicure by Geraldine Holford at the Wall Group for Dior Le Vernis; casting by Sisi Chonco for Zan Casting; model: Bruna Rosa at Next





## GAME CHANGERS

Incentive to keep your resolutions this year: These gym classics have seriously upped their game



Viscose-blend top, CHANEL, price on request, at Chanel boutiques nationwide



Calfskin handbag, DIOR, \$3,700, at Dior boutiques nationwide



Leather sneaker, RAG & BONE, \$495, at Rag & Bone stores nationwide



Cotton top, ROSIE ASSOULIN, \$595, collection at Kirna Zabête, NYC



SEEN AT CHLOÉ

Track pants pick up where last season's tuxedo trousers left off: as the effortlessly chic, wear-with-anything essential that's simultaneously laid-back and oh-so-soigné.

Don Smith; runway: iMaxtree.com; Chanel top: Richard Maiztrak/Studio D; Rosie Assoulin top and Rag & Bone sneaker: Devon Jarvis/Studio D (thru) by Sabrina Grande; runway details, from left: FirstView, GoRunway.com; FirstView, GoRunway.com; remaining image: courtesy of the designer; for details, see Shopping Guide

Mesh T-shirt, cotton bra, prices on request, viscose pants, \$895, mesh baseball hat, \$195, palladium-plated brass earrings, \$295, all, ALEXANDER WANG, at Alexander Wang, NYC. Rose gold and ceramic watch on elastomer strap, ROLEX, price on request, visit rolex.com

### SOLES REJOICE! Trainers run the world—and the spring runways



ALEXANDER WANG



MARC JACOBS



HERMÈS



TOMMY HILF





#RESORT365



## SWEATER WEATHER

These arts-and-crafts-chic knits from the spring collections are ready to wrap up in, ASAP



SEEN AT  
MIU MIU



Knit sweater,  
HILFIGER  
COLLECTION,  
\$390, at Tommy  
Hilfiger, NYC



Knit sweater, PRABAL GURUNG, price on  
request, collection at [net-a-porter.com](http://net-a-porter.com)



Knit sweater, PUBLIC  
SCHOOL, price on  
request, to special order,  
call 212-302-1108



Hand-crocheted wool sweater,  
ORLEY, \$1,895, visit [orley.us](http://orley.us)

Runway and backstage: [imoxthree.com](http://imoxthree.com) (13); Hilfiger Collection sweater, Prabal Gurung sweater, Public School sweater, and Orley sweater: Devon Jarvis/Studio D (styled by Sabrina Grande); for details, see Shopping Guide

ALL EYES ON Model and Amsterdam native Yasmin Wijnaldum dominated the catwalk for spring '16



BACKSTAGE AT GIAMBATTISTA VALLI



**FRESH DIRECT** These three new shapes will take your spring look to new levels of chic—here's how to make them work

Dan Smith; for details, see Shopping Guide



### OFF THE SHOULDER

Showcase this season's It feature—the collarbone—to maximum effect by keeping jewels to a minimum. There's nothing sexier than letting a (tasteful) glimpse of skin shine.

*Crepe top, price on request, pants, \$990, both, EDUN, similar styles at Neiman Marcus stores nationwide. Ring, MARIA BLACK, \$265, visit [maria-black.com](http://maria-black.com). Sneakers, JORDAN BRAND, \$95, visit [jordan.com](http://jordan.com)*



### WIDE LEG

The wide-leg crop can make legs look a mile long—provided you don't get lost in the excess volume. Ground the look with a substantial shoe, be it a midcalf boot or a stacked heel.

*Silk jumpsuit, RALPH LAUREN COLLECTION, \$3,590, visit [ralphlauren.com](http://ralphlauren.com). Locket necklace, MONICA RICH KOSANN, price on request, visit [monicarichkosann.com](http://monicarichkosann.com). Ring, MARIA BLACK, \$265, visit [maria-black.com](http://maria-black.com). Ankle boots, JIMMY CHOO, \$1,495, at select Jimmy Choo stores nationwide*



### EXTREME CUTOUT

Fashion's take on show-and-tell: The secret to nailing a daring cutout dress is in the balance between conceal and reveal. Masculine brogues keep it modern.

*Cotton dress, ROSIE ASSOULIN, price on request, collection at The Room, Toronto. Necklace, PAOLA VAN DER HULST, price on request, collection at [modaoperandi.com](http://modaoperandi.com). Oxfords, ROBERT CLERGERIE, \$550, at Robert Clergerie, NYC*



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#SPEAKEIMI



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# ACCESSORIES

## KNOT'S LANDING

Artisanal handiwork adds  
homespun charm to luxe  
leather accessories

*Woven kidskin  
espadrille, CÉLINE,  
\$910, at Céline, NYC*

*Woven calfskin  
handbag, SONIA  
RYKIEL, \$2,140,  
collection at  
[saksfifthavenue.com](http://saksfifthavenue.com)*

*Woven leather ankle  
boot, VALENTINO  
GARAVANI, price  
on request, at  
Valentino boutiques  
nationwide*

*Gold cuffs, both, VERDURA, prices  
on request, at Verdura, NYC*

Svend Lindbeck (prop styling by Peter Tran for Art Department); for details, see Shopping Guide



# BEST AND BRIGHTEST

Aquatic resort extras and the latest dazzlers from the fine-jewelry realm



*Vinyl sandal,  
ALEXANDER WANG,  
\$450, at Alexander  
Wang, NYC*



*Stainless steel watch on  
rubber strap, OMEGA,  
price on request, visit  
[omegawatches.com](http://omegawatches.com).*

*Ceramic watch on rubber  
strap, HUBLOT, price on  
request, visit [hublot.com](http://hublot.com)*



*Printed-leather handbag,  
LOUIS VUITTON, \$4,100,  
call 866-VUITTON*

Svend Lindbaek (prop styling by Peter Tran for Art Department); for details, see Shopping Guide



# SHINE ON

With help from a slew of new talents, plus one major blast from the past

## 1 Law of Attraction

As the daughter of diamond traders and mother of street-style star Leandra (aka the Man Repeller), Laura Medine knows a thing or two about getting attention. Her colorful collection runs the gamut from birthstone “shaker” necklaces to futuristic moonstone rings to these shoulder-grazing baubles from her Confetti range.

## 2 Pebble Riche

The idea to inlay humble pebbles with precious stones came to French financier-turned-jewelry designer Charlie de Viel Castel while he was strolling on a beach shortly after inheriting a raw diamond from his late grandmother. Now his diamond-sprinkled pendants are sold at Barneys and Miami’s The Webster.

## 3 Do the Twist

Ethical mining company Gemfields sought out former Christie’s gem expert Glenn Spiro (now of G by Glenn Spiro, his bespoke jewelry firm) to put a spin on its latest discovery—a treasure trove of Mozambican rubies. Turn the bloom of this pavé diamond Reveal ring to uncover a five-carat, cushion-cut red beauty.

## 4 The Resurrection

So distinctive was Suzanne Belperron’s work in the 1930s that the Parisian jeweler didn’t feel the need to sign it—her aesthetic spoke for itself. Thanks to Verdura’s Ward Landrigan, who purchased the Belperron archive of 9,200-plus sketches in 1999, and his son Nico, who just relaunched the brand, her timeless designs—now, collectors will be glad to note, clearly hallmarked—live on.



1  
White gold, diamond, moonstone, and multicolor gemstone earrings, LAURA MEDINE, \$3,550, at Laura Medine, NYC



2  
From left: Gray beach stone, diamond, and gold necklace, \$2,760, broken and ivory beach stone, diamond, and gold necklace, \$2,840, black beach stone, diamond, and gold necklace, \$3,280, all, CVC STONES, collection at The Webster, Miami



3  
Rose gold, diamond, pink sapphire, and Gemfields Mozambican ruby ring, G BY GLENN SPIRO, price on request, exclusively at Bergdorf Goodman, NYC

4  
Gold, platinum, and diamond necklace, BELPERRON, price on request, at Belperron, NYC



# THE CRYING GAME

In a season where boudoir dressing, warm-ups, and twisted-sister lady suits are all the rage, three of the industry's biggest talents (Raf! Alber! Alex!) bid adieu to their jobs. Will fashion ever be the same?

By Anne Slowey

"Happiness is the secret to all beauty. There is no beauty without happiness." So said one of the world's most important couturiers, Christian Dior. To which I would add: There are no beautiful clothes if the world's most talented designers aren't happy in their jobs.

In a season of revolutionary shake-ups, in which three of the industry's most talented designers left storied French houses, fashion followers are left wondering, What's next? That's not to say there wasn't excitement on the spring 2016 runways, but it's the behind-the-scenes drama that everybody's obsessed with now.

It all started in late July, when news broke that Alexander Wang was departing Balenciaga after only two years as its artistic director. Kering czar François-Henri Pinault's new pick for Balenciaga turned out to be fashion's latest darling, Vetements founder and designer Demna Gvasalia. With just three seasons at Vetements, Gvasalia cut his teeth over the last decade at Martin Margiela and Louis Vuitton. Hiring a relative unknown whose career is on fire, and who is seemingly unafraid to challenge established notions of luxury, seems smart, but no one expected that less than three weeks later, Christian Dior designer Raf Simons would walk away from what is often considered the most coveted job in fashion. Hired as creative director in April 2012, Simons, in his farewell statement, commented on the need to "focus on other interests in my life, including my own brand,

and the passions that drive me outside of my work."

The relentless pressures and pace of fashion, and the rapid rate at which it's digested—and the purported harm this does to a designer's creative vision, let alone to his or her physical health—is not a new topic for discussion. The evening following Simons's announcement, at Fashion Group International's Night of Stars, an industry award dinner in New York, Lanvin designer Alber Elbaz kept the conversation going. He lamented the shift in designers' primary responsibility from caring about what women want and how to make them look beautiful to becoming creative directors who "mostly direct...become image makers, creating a buzz." At a time when fashion seems torn between those who design for the 24/7 social-media sphere and those who still want to live their lives, Elbaz's moving speech seemed prescient, though what exactly he was foretelling no one was quite sure.

Six days later, as we all now know, Elbaz was fired, due to what the company called long-standing differences with Lanvin's majority-shareholder owner over direction and business strategy. At press time, we're still waiting to hear who will replace him at Lanvin, and Simons at Dior.

Healing—the spiritual kind—was on Givenchy designer Riccardo Tisci's mind. Showing for the first time in New York, Tisci (one of the names in the running for Dior) paid tribute to 9/11 with his much-







Gucci



Alexander  
McQueen



Proenza  
Schouler



Celine



Valentino



Givenchy



Louis  
Vuitton



Prada



Marc  
Jacobs



Saint  
Laurent



Loewe



Vetements



Calvin  
Klein



Miu Miu



Fendi



Rodarte



Chanel



Versace



Sacai



Altuzarra



Dries Van  
Noten





discussed, elegiac show staged on a pier overlooking the Hudson and in the glow of the Twin Towers' sky-light memorial. With artist pal Marina Abramović, Tisci invited vocalists, monks, and artists to perform throughout a show in which models floated by in ethereal lace dresses and even in tuxedos.

Not to be outdone, Marc Jacobs staged a show at New York's Ziegfeld Theater that rivaled the more theatrical presentations John Galliano produced when he was at Dior. Jacobs has stated that fashion for him is still "an emo-

tional and autobiographical process." Certainly, emotions ran the gamut at his show—an ode to '40s Hollywood glamour and every Americana-inspired era since—complete with a jazz orchestra and cigarette girls "selling" candy and popcorn. Jacobs touched upon many of the dominant ideas of the season, which went on to resurface in London, Milan, and Paris: boudoir lace and lingerie as outerwear, transparency, corsetry, tuxedo dressing, '50s bad boys, the new not-so-ladylike "lady suit," tails and straps, pleats and bows, frills

and flounces, tribal prints and fishnet knits, varsity and warm-up jackets, and designer denim. The all-encompassing extravaganza trumpeted individuality over trends, predicting what would become the most dominant message of the season, not to mention the "cold-shoulder" dresses and tops. Jack McCollough and Lazaro Hernandez showed one of their best Proenza Schouler collections to date: tiered dresses, tops, and flared pants redolent of Latin dance motifs and inspired in part by a trip the pair took to Cuba to





visit Hernandez's family, some of whom he hadn't seen in nearly 25 years.

There were those who still had their eye on the future. Phoebe Philo, who's never been one to look backward, continued to redefine daywear at Céline by combining lingerie slips, trench coats, and Joan of Arc tunics, demonstrating her staying power as one of the few female designers who are pushing the needle in a new direction. At Loewe, Jonathan Anderson toyed with cellophane pants and broken glass in a way that seemed otherworldly, and at Louis Vuitton,

Nicolas Ghesquière riffed on the digital world, playing the soundtrack from Minecraft and snippets of Jeff Bridges from Joseph Kosinski's 2010 *TRON: Legacy*—and citing Wong Kar Wai's 2046, actress Doona Bae from *Sense8*, and the Japanese manga *Neon Genesis Evangelion* as inspirations. As for the clothes themselves, there were spaceship prints, motocross jackets, and dresses covered with appliquéd celluloid sequins hand-painted to create the effect of an oil stain. It was a refreshing conclusion to a season that was steeped in nostalgia and

unsettled by backstage rumblings.

Could we be at the end of an era, with the hypertalented among designers now willing to decamp from the most glittering, influential fashion houses at their own measured pace? The answer is not yet entirely clear, but Mr. Dior probably wouldn't fault Simons, Elbaz, and Wang for their decisions (and, after all, Elbaz's unwillingness to make *other* decisions probably got him ousted in the first place). As Dior liked to say: "It is unforgivable to do what one doesn't love, especially if one succeeds." •

# ALEXANDER THE GREAT

Celebrating his tenth anniversary, and fresh off his departure as artistic director at Balenciaga, **Alexander Wang** dishes with Anne Slowey on launching a jewelry line and what luxury means today

**ANNE SLOWEY:** Tell us about your spring 2016 collection.

**ALEXANDER WANG:** I asked myself what “modern” really means. It’s such an over-used term, and I just wanted to remind myself what it actually stands for: Modern is something that is in front of you right *now*. A sense of immediacy. I looked at wardrobe elements that are almost banal—a sweatshirt, jean shorts, lingerie, cargo pants—and how we can make them covetable at the same time. Nothing is tricked out or complicated; everything is informal and real.

**AS:** So why chain-link jewelry?

**AW:** It’s inspired by an industrial bike chain, which you see a lot in New York City. Our version is brass, plated with either palladium or gold, which makes it both tough and delicate. It is the opposite of precious. The launch collection includes three core items: a double-lock necklace, a lock-hinge cuff bracelet, and three-link earrings.

**AS:** What inspires you when you design?

**AW:** Inspiration comes to me from the everyday. Not necessarily an exotic location; I’m just as intrigued by the banal, by what surrounds me. Music is a huge inspiration, for sure. The music itself, the performers, the energy of a concert. Confidence is inspiring; someone’s personal style. Instagram is a source of inspiration—sometimes not the actual images, but the sensibility of a post. When I launched my brand, a key objective was—and has remained—that I wanted to make clothes that are not defined by price point. Clothes that have design integrity, but that are also approachable and accessible.

**AS:** How do you see the future of fashion retail play out online versus in-store?

**AW:** A store allows you to create an environment for the collections that is 100 percent controlled by you. E-commerce will definitely be the future, but brick-and-mortar stores will act as showrooms, like Apple.

**AS:** Since social media doesn’t result in a high percentage of sales, what is it good for?

**AW:** For sure, it’s generally a younger audience that follows social media. While they are very interested in fashion, some do not yet have the spending power to be our customer. I was a bit of a late adopter; I questioned how to utilize social media for my brand. But now it feels like second nature, and I love talking to my audience directly. It represents a very immediate and democratic way of reaching out to our customer.

**AS:** You’ve always had a talent for tapping into the Zeitgeist. Are people less into status and more into the spirit of individuality?

**AW:** When it comes to objects and possessions, my feeling is luxury used to be quite a bit more ostentatious. Luxury and status today are more personal, more subtle. My aim is to be inclusive instead of exclusive. At some moments you want to treat yourself to something really extravagant; then you [want to] go to a dive bar. It’s those oppositions that ultimately make for the most interesting lifestyle and individual style.

**AS:** Is it still relevant to be part of a tribe?

**AW:** Yes, 100 percent, the customer is and wants to be part of a tribe. Individuality is important, but people are connected to their peers and their gang through shared

values and ideals. For example, with sneakers or with a limited-edition product, there are people who cultishly buy one sneaker brand, or they queue up to get that particular limited-edition T-shirt. It has a high value to them. Someone else will think it’s just any old T-shirt or just a regular sneaker. Someone who is not in the know—or has different priorities—will not value that product. It’s that shared knowledge of the value of something that creates a tribe.

**AS:** How has working with fast fashion opened your eyes to the appetites of the masses?

**AW:** The H&M collaboration came about shortly after I started at Balenciaga. It was an incredible experience to have exposure with my own label, a high-street brand, and a heritage Parisian house and to create products with integrity for each customer. It gave me so much discipline and focus.

**AS:** Your own brand always feels like it comes from a real place. Has working as a couturier opened your mind to aspirational possibilities?

**AW:** Realness is aspirational to me. I don’t ever want to lose touch with what is real.

**AS:** What’s your favorite drink?

**AW:** Vodka. Straight up.

**AS:** What’s on your playlist?

**AW:** Drake and Future’s new album. And also Travis Scott.

**AS:** What makes a good party?

**AW:** Mystery. You can never be quite sure what to expect. Great music. And a great crowd. ●

Alexander Wang:  
necklace and  
bracelet from his  
spring 2016  
runway show

Wang: © David Needelman/Corbis Outlines; still lifes: Richard Maizraak/Studio D





Carey Mulligan &amp; Meryl Streep



Dakota Johnson &amp; Salma Hayek



Zoe Saldana &amp; L'Oréal Paris Woman of Worth, Maria D'Angela



Joel McHale, Ava DuVernay, Alicia Vikander, Salma Hayek, Robbie Myers, Amy Schumer &amp; Dakota Johnson

# ELLE WOMEN IN HOLLYWOOD

ELLE celebrated the 22nd annual **Women in Hollywood** event at the Four Seasons Beverly Hills hotel on October 19. With sponsors Calvin Klein Collection, L'Oréal Paris, and David Yurman, ELLE brought together Hollywood's most stunning and accomplished talent for an awards ceremony honoring Ava DuVernay, Salma Hayek, Carey Mulligan, Amy Schumer, Alicia Vikander, Kate Winslet, Gena Rowlands, and Dakota Johnson; the evening was hosted by Joel McHale.



Robbie Myers, ELLE Editor-in-Chief



Ty Burrell



Shailene Woodley



Meryl Streep



Molly Sims &amp; Rachel Zoe



Jaime King



Ava DuVernay



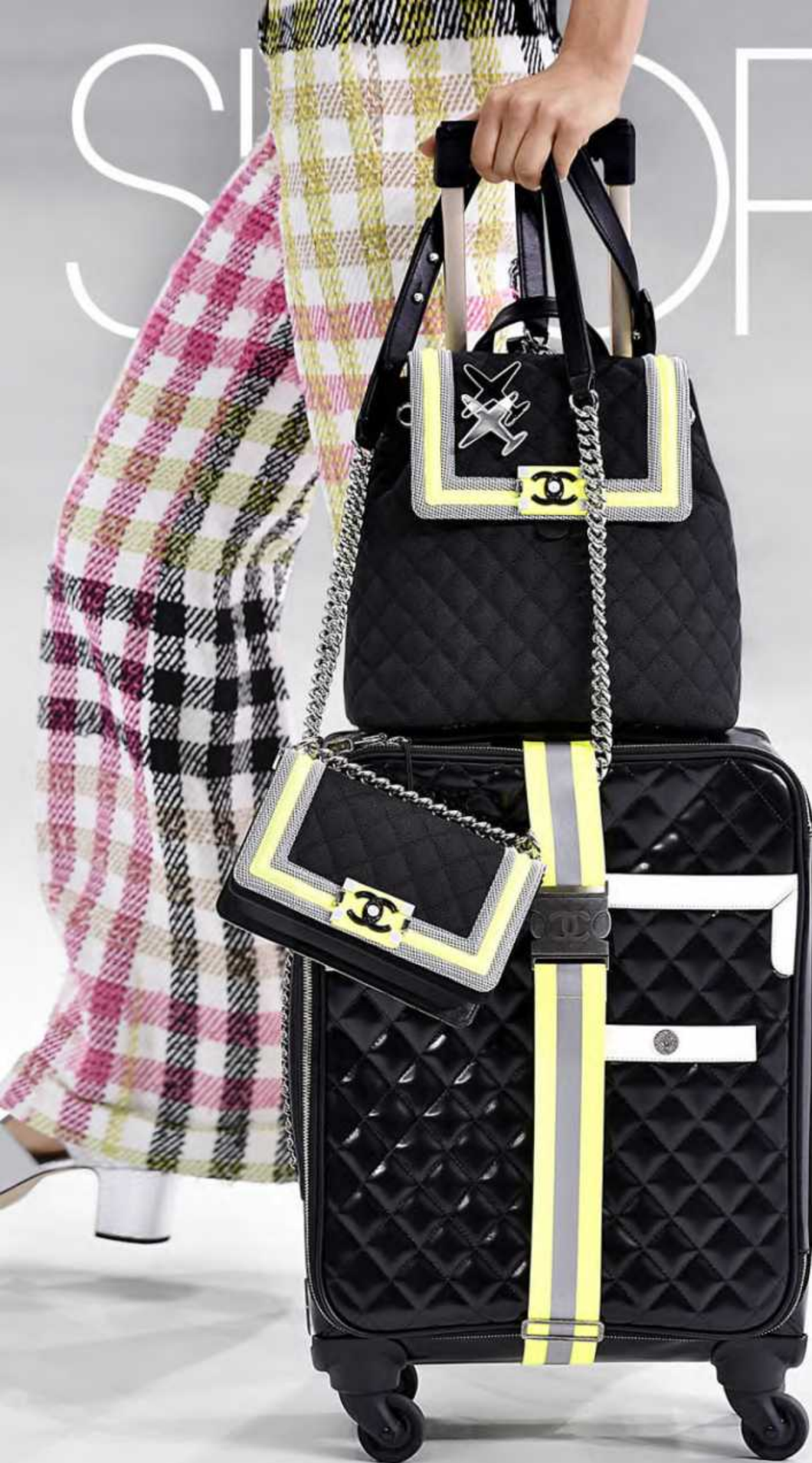
Mary J. Blige



Emmanuelle Chriqui, Nina Dobrev, Jenna Dewan Tatum &amp; Julianne Hough



# SHOPS



## COME FLY WITH ME

Each season, the fashion-month crowd hopes to be transported from the packed venues to some far-flung place, real or imagined. Karl Lagerfeld took this call literally when orchestrating Chanel's spring show, constructing an airport terminal for "Chanel Airlines." (How *did* Karl know that ELLE was plotting its first-ever travel issue!?) Here, we highlight two new fashion capitals, Prague and Havana—book your flights now: Lagerfeld will hold his upcoming resort show in the Cuban capital later this year and equip you with the ultimate jet-setter travel essentials. Bon voyage!

*Mesh, metal, and Plexiglass handbag, \$2,900, backpack, price on request, glazed calfskin and metal suitcase, price on request, all, CHANEL, call 800-550-0005. For details, see Shopping Guide.*



# ELLE WOMEN IN HOLLYWOOD



Carey Mulligan



Lena Dunham  
& Amy Schumer



Kiernan Shipka



Dakota Johnson, Tippi Hedren, Melanie Griffith & Stella Banderas



Alicia Vikander & Kate Winslet



Tony Goldwyn, Katie Lowes & Darby Stanchfield



Miranda Kerr, Francisco Costa, Women's Creative  
Director Calvin Klein Collection, & Zoë Kravitz



Busy Philips &  
Leslie Mann



Bellamy Young &  
Constance Zimmer



Sarah Hyland



Nikki Reed &  
America Ferrera



Abigail  
Spencer



Ellie Bamber, Bella Heathcote, Zoey  
Deutch & Ashley Madekwe



Jenna Elfman



Stacey Snider &  
Nina Dobrev



Tracee Ellis Ross



Joel McHale & Judd Apatow



Lorraine Toussaint, Emayatzy  
Corinealdi & Niecy Nash

presented by **Calvin Klein** **L'ORÉAL**  
collection PARIS

special thanks to **DAVID YURMAN**



# GOING THE DISTANCE

Two international travel destinations become style hot spots as they influence spring's buzziest collections



Straw hat, \$162, gold tassel pin, \$205, both, SENSI STUDIO, collection at net-a-porter.com



Satin crepe clutch, PROENZA SCHOULER, \$790, at Proenza Schouler, NYC

Silk top, WHIT, \$298, visit whit-ny.com



Glass and brass earrings, CÉLINE, \$490, at Céline, NYC



Snakeskin sandal, AQUAZZURA, \$895, collection at Neiman Marcus stores nationwide



Printed bikini, PROENZA SCHOULER, \$450, at Proenza Schouler, NYC

Havana's famous Malecón esplanade is home to equally vibrant vintage Chevys and facades.



Silk dress, TIBI, \$595, visit tibi.com



Net handbag, COLLECTED BY THE LINE, \$18, visit theline.com

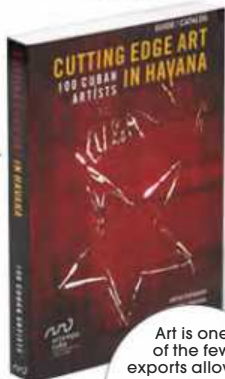


## Cuba Libre!

Havana's lively hues and tropical motifs inspire a true vacation wardrobe

With the U.S. reestablishing diplomatic ties with Cuba last July came a wave of influence from the Antillean island—notably in Proenza Schouler's mambo-ready, ruffled-and-feathered spring 2016 dresses, worn with banana-leaf earrings. It's an exuberant look, worthy of taking in vibrant nightlife at the Tropicana or discovering the rich contemporary art scene at the Fábrica de Arte Cubano.

PROENZA SCHOULER



Cutting Edge Art in Havana, by Mayret González-Martínez and Yoanna Toledo-Leyva, ARTEMPOCUBA, \$60, visit artempocuba.com

Art is one of the few exports allowed over Cuban borders; get to know the country's most famous creators.

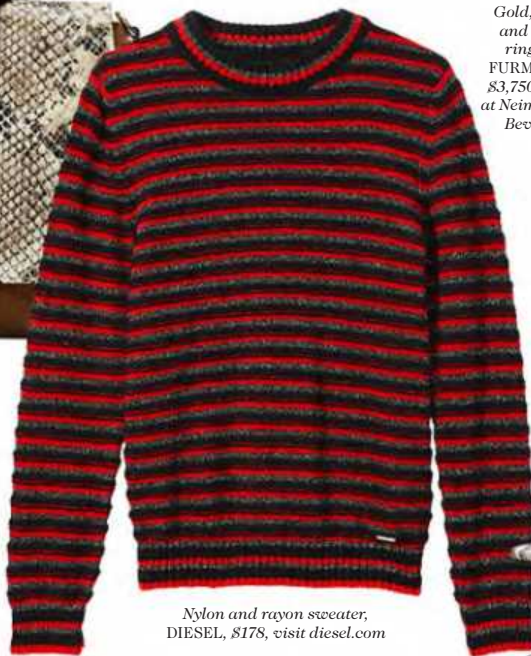


Crocodile-embossed leather and grosgrain slides, AVEC MODÉRATION, \$265, collection at Atelier 7918, Newport Beach, CA





Python-embossed leather and suede cross-body bag, ELIZABETH AND JAMES, \$445, collection at nordstrom.com



Nylon and rayon sweater, DIESEL, \$178, visit diesel.com

Gold, tsavorite, and turquoise ring, SILVIA FURMANOVICH, \$3,750, collection at Neiman Marcus, Beverly Hills



Leather sandal, STUART WEITZMAN, \$425, at Stuart Weitzman, Beverly Hills



Metallic skirt, DKNY, \$495, collection at Bloomingdale's stores nationwide

A bird's-eye view of Prague's roofscape offers a glimpse back in time.



Gold-plated brass, onyx, agate, and mother-of-pearl earrings, LIZZIE FORTUNATO, \$365, collection at Neiman Marcus, Beverly Hills



## Czech, Please

Prague plays muse to left-of-center style-setters seeking a cultural experience as eclectic as their ensembles

Strolling across the iconic, misty Charles Bridge, the view of Prague is all Gothic archways, cobblestone streets, and aged edifices—a postcard-perfect backdrop for the rich colors and textures, straight from old-world Europe (lush fur collars and metallics), that have become new again at Alessandro Michele's Gucci. That vibrant mix mirrors the visitor's experience, taking you from lunch atop the Frank Gehry-designed Dancing House to the ninth-century Gothic-style Prague Castle.



Wool and faux-fur coat, SHRIMPS, \$1,308, collection at matchesfashion.com



Lizard-embossed calfskin loafers, NEWBARK, \$795, collection at net-a-porter.com

Crystal cocktail glasses, ARTEL, \$253 each, collection at Cursive New York, NYC



This sculptural handblown glassware is created locally using centuries-old techniques.



GUCCI



# LEADER OF THE PACK

On-the-move fashion and food blogger **Peony Lim** shares her travel essentials, whether she's off on a weekend jaunt or headed on a far-off expedition

When she isn't snapping pictures around her native London, chances are Peony Lim is on a flight to Paris, Berlin, or Hong Kong in search of new Insta-ready experiences to share with her 67,000-plus followers. With all that travel comes a lot of packing, an art that the half-Chinese, half-English blogger has down pat. For starters: "Pack whole outfits in dry-cleaner bags," she says. "Air gets locked in, so your clothes don't crease."



Lim on the beach in the Maldives.



Sunglasses, KREWE DU OPTIC, \$255, visit [kreweduoptic.com](http://kreweduoptic.com)

"A scarf that can double as a blanket means you don't have to use the one on the plane." Cotton-blend scarf, LEMLEM, \$210, similar styles at [lemlem.com](http://lemlem.com)



Cotton poplin pants, PLAMITA, \$325, collection at [modaoperandi.com](http://modaoperandi.com)



"This is the blogger camera. It works really well for shooting editorial-quality stories. Plus, it's lighter than others for easy travel."



EOS 5D Mark III digital SLR camera, CANON, \$2,799, visit [usa.canon.com](http://usa.canon.com)

Metal, rose gold, and leather headphones, FRIENDS, \$200, visit [WeAreFRIENDS.com](http://WeAreFRIENDS.com)



Vintage Lim: Her poolside image at the Alila Villas Soori in Bali.



"A bit of red can really perk you up while traveling. This one's a great moisturizing lipstick that can double as a lip balm."



Velvet flats, STUBBS & WOOTTON, \$450, visit [stubbssandwootton.com](http://stubbssandwootton.com)



Cherry Lush Lip Color, TOM FORD, \$52, visit [tomford.com](http://tomford.com). Eight Hour Cream Skin Protectant, ELIZABETH ARDEN, \$21, visit [elizabetharden.com](http://elizabetharden.com)

Linen shirt, L.L.BEAN, \$50, visit [llbean.com](http://llbean.com)

"Goyard totes are light but really strong, so I can carry my laptop and camera easily. Also makes a great beach bag!" Reversible calfskin tote, GOYARD, \$2,700, exclusively at Goyard, NYC



Portrait and poolside: Peony Lim; Plamita pants: Richard Majchzak/Studio D (styled by Gabriel Rivera for RJ Bennett Represents); remaining images: courtesy of the designers; for details, see Shopping Guide





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# BOOM BOOM TICK

Dua Lipa's unconventional beats are about to take over the dance floor.

By Bobby Olivier

UK native Dua Lipa is a totally unpredictable singer-songwriter—and that's a great thing. Her first single, the bounding groove "New Love"—which riled the "Who is this girl?" music-blog chatter over the summer—zigs where today's dance pop typically zags. Rather than descend into a bass-anchored, thumping chorus, the song's hypnotic, island-style pulse abruptly, wonderfully pulls back to a slow-jam beat, allowing the underlying power of Lipa's voice to take the lead in her demand for a more committed kind of love. On her latest single, "Be the One," the 20-year-old's rich, sultry tone is equally evocative, pleading for romantic

redemption as it plays off a crisp, pop patter.

"When I showed 'New Love' to people, they'd say, 'Oh, I didn't expect that,'" says Lipa, who moved to her parents' native Kosovo at age 8, only to return to London at 15—alone—to find herself creatively. "I loved that reaction," she continues, "so I went with it." The rest of her spring EP marries Lipa's childhood pop heroes—P!nk, Destiny's Child, Christina Aguilera—with a recent hip-hop obsession and a flare of deep disco. While her sound is mature, her lyrics are flooded with a vulnerability sprung from love's desperate, longing moments. After all, she's still young enough to be navigating the same emotions as the fans she hopes to inspire. "I just want to perform while people sing my songs with me. *That's* the feeling I want to have." •



# LIFE IN THE BIG CASINO

Two takes on American capitalism and its discontents will have you laughing—and maybe thinking—out loud.

By Ben Dickinson

Theaters this month feature a double dose of savage, smart send-ups—one a dramatic comedy, the other a documentary—about the way Americans live today, in the wake of the 2008 financial meltdown and the Great Recession. Michael Moore (*Roger & Me*, *Fahrenheit 9/11*) is up to his usual shoulder cam-interview mischief in *Where to Invade Next*, albeit in a sunnier, more optimistic mode than he has affected before. But little of writer-director Adam McKay's previous work—the *Anchorman* movies, *Talladega Nights*, *Step Brothers*, and *The Other Guys*—has suggested that he'd come up with an in-your-face dramatization of *The Big Short*, Michael Lewis's best-selling book about the subprime mortgage crisis. With a high-wattage cast, cleverly interlocking plotlines, and a high-spirited, high-IQ brio that keeps one-upping itself, this lightly fictionalized tale about contrarians feeding off the avarice of the financial industry and the misfortune of homeowners will stay with you after your belly laughs die away.

"There have been a bunch of movies about finance in the last 30 years," McKay says, "and they're great, but I thought they portrayed Wall Street as cold and austere—and implied that none of us are educated enough to get near it," which he clearly deems to be shameless mystification. So he set out to do something different, inspired by the antic atmosphere conjured by Lewis. Genius here doesn't arrive in pinstripes and chauffeured luxury cars—it comes in the form of Michael Burry, played by Christian Bale with trademark intensity: a misfit, loner, and stock savant so singular in his insights that he makes \$100 million betting on the collapse of the subprime mortgage bubble. Then there's Brad Pitt as an avuncular finance vet who helps a couple of young protégés make an easy killing. Steve Carell and Ryan Gosling



Ryan Gosling and...Jenga? See the movie for the metaphor.

show up respectively as a hedge-funder and a banker who figure out early on what these other folks already know: Wall Street has created a vast pyramid scheme that is doomed to collapse when the music stops.

McKay conveys the jittery, caffeinated chaos of this crisis atmosphere with *vérité* immediacy—via both set-piece scenes and documentary-style mobile-cam sequences (he name-checks Paul Greengrass's *Bourne* movies as an influence)—punctuated by droll breaks in the fourth wall when the principals address us directly. And in a way, that's what McKay, an inveterate political junkie, is doing himself: "My wife is so relieved that I did this movie," he says, "because I can finally shut up about all this stuff at home." As for the dearth of female characters central to the story, McKay says flatly, "Don't blame me, blame Wall Street!" But Marisa Tomei, Melissa Leo, and Selena Gomez are among the players who flow in and out of the narrative and create some bravura scenes.

Moore's *Where to Invade Next* serves as a chaser to McKay's amorality tale. He

illuminates how Americans are struggling along these days by going abroad to show us how many weeks of paid vacation Italians get (seven seems a not-unusual number); how Finland took our principle of universal public education and turned it into the egalitarian and meritocratic envy of the world; how students in France's elementary schools enjoy straight-up gourmet lunches (when shown pictures of cafeteria fare in American schools, the French kids recoil in horror); how higher education in Slovenia is free for all comers (we meet enterprising American undergrads who, unable to foot their college bill at home, have simply moved to Ljubljana to get their degrees). And so on. Moore finishes with a rousing feminist take on how women from Iceland to Tunisia have grasped the levers of power, to their societies' general benefit. In his pilgrim's progress around the various (mostly European) nations that he admires and wishes we would emulate, he brandishes a big American flag that he good-naturedly plants in the ground to claim these fine policies and ideas for his own benighted countrymen.

These two films leave an impression that we are perhaps caught up in some kind of self-inflicted fairy-tale curse that makes our lives unnecessarily hard: We're the only industrialized country where paid parental leave is not the law of the land. ●

Brad Pitt drops some subprime science in *The Big Short*.



Stylish by Emily Barnes (hair by Yoichi Tomizawa for Oribe; makeup by Grace Ahn for Dior Beauty; manicure by Holly Falcon for Kate Ryan Inc. for Chanel Le Vernis). Lupa wears: Cashmere cardigan, Chanel, \$3,650. Gold and black diamond ring, \$1,700, rose gold and ruby ring, \$1,500, both, Garland Collection. Embellished sneakers, Golden Goose Deluxe Brand, \$445. For details, see Shopping Guide.

MOVIES  
TRUST US



### RETURN OF THE REPRESSED

Andrew Haigh's drama *45 Years* has won universal acclaim in Europe. As a British couple approaches their titular anniversary festivities, the husband (Tom Courtenay) receives shattering news about the long-ago love of his life. Charlotte Rampling magnificently plays the wife, who appears laceratingly stoic but is secretly almost undone by what the news means about their marriage.



### SICK IN THE HEAD

You won't hear the clash of colliding football helmets the same way after seeing *Concussion*, a biopic about Bennet Omalu, the Nigerian-born pathologist who raised the NFL's ire when he identified the debilitating brain damage that plagues many former players. Will Smith deploys a persuasive clipped accent and an unbowed bearing as Omalu; Gugu Mbatha-Raw plays his demure émigré love interest.



### THE BARD REDUX

In the gorgeous, brutalist new film adaptation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, Michael Fassbender and Marion Cotillard mesmerize as Lord and Lady, surrounded by a brilliant supporting cast that includes David Thewlis and Elizabeth Debicki. Shot in a bleak, windswept Scottish landscape, the film mixes dirt, sweat, blood, tears, and fire into a fugue about the madness of human ambition.—*B.D.*



THEATER

## I'M HERE

A new staging of *The Color Purple* comes to Broadway, and with it an unforgettable new star

By the time the Oprah Winfrey-produced revival of the musical *The Color Purple* opens on Broadway, Cynthia Erivo, who led the much-lauded 2013 London production of the show, will already have been playing Celie—an African American woman living in rural Georgia who survives unspeakable abuse and bigotry—for over two years. Erivo thus faces a challenge as old as Broadway itself: How, night after night, do you give yourself to a role that requires so much of its actor, emotionally and physically?

"What [director] John Doyle has been able to do with this piece," Erivo says, referring to this stripped-down staging of the original 2005 production based on Alice Walker's beloved 1982 epistolary novel, "is to open everything up so all you hear are these voices and the music. And you would not believe the sound these people make. It gets to you in different ways every time. We were in a rehearsal for the final number, and John redirected us to do something, and I just lost it. I stood there weeping! So I have to take it one

scene at a time—that's the only way to get through it."

Consider her passion one reason that Erivo, a 2010 graduate of London's Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, was the only original UK cast member to make the transfer to Broadway. Another reason: her voice, which, even alongside the sky-crashing vocals of her Academy and Grammy award-winning costar, Jennifer Hudson (as Shug Avery, the female club singer with whom Celie eventually falls in love), stands out for its richness and back-of-the-theater belt. (Google Erivo's rendition of the show's second-act emotional high point "I'm Here" to see what we mean.)

However, despite such impressive women sharing a stage—*Orange Is the New Black*'s Danielle Brooks rounds out the cast as Sofia, whom Winfrey played in the 1985 film version of the novel—you won't find a stitch of diva rivalry among them. "Cynthia, Danielle—the talent in this group of people is inspiring," says Hudson. "We're creating a real sisterhood here. It's incredible. It makes you feel so alive."—*Seth Plattner*

Film stills, previous page: © 2015 Paramount Pictures. All rights reserved (2); Erivo, this page: Rachell Smith/Camera Press/Redux; movie stills, from top: courtesy of Agatha A. Niteckla © 45 Years Films Ltd., a Sundance Selects release; Melinda Sue Gordon; Jonathan Olley; Strout; opposite page: Leonardo Cendamo



(FICTION)  
THE ELLE'S  
LETTRES 2016  
READERS' PRIZE

15 ELLE readers choose their favorite among three promising recent books—this month, mom-as-protagonist novels

1 **THE EXPATRIATES**  
JANICE Y. K. LEE  
(VIKING)

Separate lives become critically entwined in this multilayered portrait of three American women living in Hong Kong. Margaret, a brokenhearted mother; Mercy, a floundering twentysomething; and Hilary, a privileged, childless housewife, each cope with private loss in a foreign country—and the result, as in Lee's previous hit, *The Piano Teacher*, is an emotionally gripping page-turner. "Be prepared to cry," wrote one reader, "and drop all your plans; you'll want to spend all day and night with this novel."



2 **THE BURNED BRIDGES OF WARD, NEBRASKA**  
EILEEN CURTRIGHT  
(LITTLE A)

In this dark comedy, newly single and driven (to a fault) mother Rebecca Meer is wading through the beginning of a midlife crisis, trapped in the claustrophobic scrutiny of a small town. Her son is on the autism spectrum, her boss is nuts, her love interest is decidedly unsuitable. What one reader described as Rebecca's "fierceness and humanity," another saw as her "abrasive behavior." Curtright has created a character with all the complexity of a real, live person.



3 **BIRD**  
NOY HOLLAND  
(COUNTERPOINT)

Holland delves deep into the psyche of the title character as she sends her son to school, cares for her infant daughter, makes her husband breakfast, and calls an old friend—all while musing over a dangerous former relationship. While some found the flashback-pastiche style too complex, most agreed that the payoff was worth the effort; that, as one reader put it, "the language used to tell this story creates a certain beauty and rhythm." —*Keziah Weir*



(FICTION)

# A SMALL GOOD THING

Elizabeth Strout's exquisite new book

By Kate Christensen



*Amy and Isabelle*, Elizabeth Strout's memorable first novel, was about a 16-year-old daughter and her mother; their fraught intensity provided the story's fuel. In her new novel, the laser-focused, beautifully crafted *My Name Is Lucy Barton* (Random House), Strout revisits the relationship between a mother and daughter in a small-town community. But this time around, the daughter, Lucy, has grown up and left Amgash, Illinois, for New York City. In the years since she's last seen her mother, she's become a writer, a wife, and a mother to two daughters.

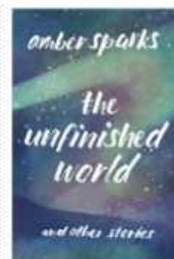
When the novel opens, Lucy, felled by a mysterious illness, has been in the hospital for three weeks. She awakens to find that her mother, in a chair at the foot of her bed, has come all the way from the Midwest to help her recover. Lucy is thrilled to see her, happy to hear her voice. Her mother calls Lucy "Wizzle-dee," her old nickname, and relays gossip from the town where Lucy grew up: "She talked in a way I didn't remember, as though a pressure of feeling and words and observations had been stuffed down inside her for years, and her voice was breathy and unselfconscious."

For five days, Lucy's mother sits in the chair, dozing off as necessary. As the doctor and nurses come and go and the Chrysler building lights up every night, a quietly heartbreaking conversation unfolds, encompassing the strange and lonely past and the unbridgeable differences in their present circumstances. Stories of other people take the place of personal confession and emotional directness: "Tell me about Kathie Nicely," Lucy begs. "I always loved her name." "Oh yes. Kathie Nicely," says her mother. "Goodness, she came to a bad end." Lucy melts with joy at the sheer pleasure of hearing her mother's voice, but at the same time, she's filled with ancient yearning for any bit of closeness to a mother who's been so distant and hedged in that she could never even say "I love you" to her daughter.

Movingly, at the end of the book, when Lucy begs her to say it, her mother's expected failure to do so is transformed into a form of love in itself. Now it's a game whose only rule is that by not saying it, she is saying it in the only way she can. And so Lucy lets herself accept the love she's always craved.

Strout is a master at elevating small-town gossip to keenly riveting drama. For further proof of her skill—and that the lives in the places she conjures are anything but small and quiet—read *Olive Kitteridge*, her 2008 novel, which won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction.

*My Name Is Lucy Barton*, at 208 pages, is bracingly short, but its spare economy is deceptive. Just as with Lucy's mother's unspoken "I love you," much of the novel's emotional power comes from what's left out. After I closed the book, I found myself still engaged, filling in blanks, while Lucy's singular, clear voice resounded like a bell in my head. ●



(BOOKS)  
TRUST US

ONCE UPON A MODERN TIME  
Amber Sparks's *The Unfinished World and Other Stories* (Liveright) has all the furnishings of a twenty-first-century homage to the carnally macabre Angela Carter. The collection captures an off-kilter universe of almost-fairy tales with equal parts beauty and melancholy: A time traveler tries to destroy a painting by altering an artist's life; a mourning widower builds houses for the newly (perhaps not fully) dead.

UNUSUAL SUSPECTS

The whip-quick snapshots in Diane Williams's *Fine, Fine, Fine, Fine* (McSweeney's) pack a sizable punch; to read is to tread unstable ground. Discomfitingly and devastatingly funny, Williams upends the mundane, the painful, and the unusual, resulting—much in the way an art teacher might ask her class to copy a photograph upside-down—in precision and clarity.



PATERS AND FAMILIAS

*Your Father Sends His Love* (Norton) explores the sprawling complications and rewards of filial piety and familial love. From a new father spending a troubled night alone with his baby to a grandfather exacting vengeance against his son through his granddaughter, each of Stuart Evers's stories swells with the deeply human yearning for connection. —*K.W.*





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# BEAUTY

For maximum luminosity, try Touche Éclat Strobging Light Limited Edition and Poudre Compact Radiance Perfection Universelle, both by Yves Saint Laurent Beauté.

## BREAKING DAWN

The new year is all about looking on the bright side. To create this high-beam effect, Yves Saint Laurent Beauté creative director of makeup Lloyd Simmonds sculpted contours with light rather than shade, sweeping an illuminator above the Cupid's bow and brows, then along the cheekbones. To "let the complexion do the talking," he finished with mascara and "extra-groomed eyebrows."

Owen Bruce



# TOP OF THE WORLD

Forty-six editions of ELLE around the globe. Thousands of products from which to choose. Fourteen winners. Here, we bring you the best of the best: our third annual International Beauty Awards. By Ali Finney



## LASH OUT

ELLE Australia's Janna Johnson O'Toole pumps up her lashes with Dior Diorshow mascara, which has a "supercharged formula that volumizes and conditions in a single swipe," thanks to ultrablack microfibers.

## SOLAR POWER

Sisley Super Soin Solaire Milky Body Mist SPF 30 isn't yet available on U.S. shelves, but ELLE Thailand's Nuttika Ongksirimongkol loves it not only for its "light and nongreasy" finish, but for its antiaging properties, thanks to edelweiss extract and vitamin E.

## STRAND SAVER

Superintense Rene Furterer Absolue Kératine Ultimate Renewal Mask "restores the natural beauty of extremely damaged, brittle hair," says ELLE Middle East's Maria Aziz.



## TRIPLE THREAT

As ELLE Malaysia's Tengku Zai puts it: "We want it all and we want it now!" For lips, nothing delivers like Clinique Pop Lip Colour + Primer (here in Poppy Pop, Cherry Pop, and Punch Pop), which combines the effects of a primer, balm, and lipstick in one tube.



## COVER ARTIST

Lancôme Miracle Cushion Foundation "gives just the right amount of coverage but feels like you're not wearing anything," says ELLE UK's Sophie Beresiner.



## IN BLOOM

Like a "big glass of water for the skin," says ELLE Québec's Angélique Martel, Chanel Hydra Beauty Micro Sérums quenches with camellia oil and protects against free-radical damage with blue ginger.







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ELLE  
INTERNATIONAL  
BEAUTY  
AWARDS  
2016

POWER CLICK

ELLE editors love glow-getting Yves Saint Laurent Touche Éclat as much today as they did when it launched more than two decades ago. Says Vanessa Craft of ELLE Canada: "It changed the beauty world with two clicks of a pen."



OCEAN POTION

A few spritzes of Bumble and bumble Surf Infusion spray create mega-beachy waves that "transport us to the islands even in the heart of winter," says Dimitra Lygizou-Karlou of ELLE Greece.



CRUSHING IT

"The equivalent of a yoga class for skin," according to ELLE U.S.'s own Emily Dougherty, Caudalie Instant Detox Mask delivers "serenity and clarity to even the most stressed complexions" by tapping the powers of grape marc (the fruit remnants after wine is made), pink clay, and papaya enzymes.

CURVE BALL

The sophisticated, sultry Azzedine Alaïa fragrance is a "beautiful pointillist abstraction of rose, musk, and suede that can blow hot and cold at the same time," says ELLE France's Elisabeth Martorell.



TIGHT END

Velina Vasileva of ELLE Bulgaria's svelte secret weapons: "healthy food, fitness, and Clarins Masvelt Body Shaping Cream," which fights cellulite with soothing hibiscus acids, firming bamboo, and contouring quince extract.

LIFT OFF

Estée Lauder New Dimension Expert Liquid Tape tightening formula is packed with collagen-boosting ingredients that have "not only an instant effect but also long-lasting antiaging results," says ELLE China's Helena Hu.



SKIN DEEP

For ELLE Italy's Sabrina Bottone, no postshower ritual is complete without Vichy Ideal Body Balm (not yet available in the U.S.), a superhydrating gel moisturizer that "absorbs very quickly and leaves skin smoother and softer."

CLEAN STREAK

Revive parched strands with Kérastase Resistance Bain Thérapiste shampoo: Its amino acid-charged formula is so hydrating that "it doesn't need a conditioner," says Arlette Barrionuevo of ELLE Argentina.



Alcides: Jeff Harris/Studio D; Clarins and Estée Lauder: Devon Jarvis/Studio D

Awards



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/ fill with powder



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Gigi is wearing New Brow Drama® Pro Palette in Soft Brown.  
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The singer's new essential is the M.A.C. ELLIE GOULDING Powder Blush (Duo) in I'll Hold My Breath. "I love getting spray-tanned, so my skin is always changing," she says. "This gives you a bit of contour and a nice, fresh cheek color."

When she scents mega-volume onstage, Goulding spritzes on ORIBE Maximista Thickening Spray. "It's also a really good primer before you blow-dry."



Every morning, Goulding brushes the JAMES READ BB Gradual Tan Pen on her face. "It's the best ever. I never get weirdly broken."



Goulding is "obsessed" with RODIAL Bee Venom Super Serum. "When I put it on under my makeup, people tell me my skin looks great. It's got a tiny, tiny bit of shimmer in it."



The soft-peach M.A.C. ELLIE GOULDING Patentpolish Lip Pencil in Revved Up is "lightweight and moisturizing—perfect for when you're not wearing much else."

**Has being in the spotlight made you more or less likely to experiment?**

It's taken time to see what works for me. When I first started in music, I didn't have a clue. I was hard on myself for not knowing what to wear or what kind of makeup I wanted. I was still very naïve and thought I had to look a certain way to be noticed.

**How do you cope with having to always be photo-ready?**

This sounds like a cliché, but I really have discovered the power of confidence. My face hasn't changed, but I look different in photos now because I'm happy. I have a bit more acceptance and love for myself, and that's really helped. A couple of weeks ago, my boyfriend [Doug Poynter, of British band McBusted] and I went out to dinner, and I didn't wear makeup. I didn't feel insecure, which is interesting because that wouldn't have been the case when I was younger.

**Judging by your Instagram, you have a pretty rigorous fitness routine.**

I like quick, high-intensity stuff, like boxing. I never used to be into yoga because I felt like it took too long, which defeats the whole object of being Zen, but I'm trying to do it whenever I can. ●

**Bag check:**  
Goulding and Poynter share Rodial eye masks.



# SOUND EFFECTS

Effervescent pop star—and faux-lash enthusiast—Ellie Goulding shares her beauty tips with April Long

Like her genre-scrambling music, Ellie Goulding is full of delightful contradictions. The 29-year-old Brit is equally at ease in punky athletic gear as she is in the gold Alberta Ferretti gown she's wearing when she greets me in a London hotel room; and while she's a dynamo onstage—banging a drum kit, slinging an electric guitar—in person, she's serenity incarnate. Since capturing the world's attention as William and Kate's wedding singer in 2011, Goulding has sold more than 20 million records (her third album, *Delirium*, was released in November), been the rumored subject of Ed Sheeran's hit "Don't," and played matchmaker for Taylor Swift and Calvin Harris. As she proudly shows off her new 18-piece makeup collaboration with M.A.C, Goulding reflects on what it takes to stay authentic

in an industry that focuses as much on how you look as how you sound.

**If your M.A.C collection were a song, what would it be?**

That's such a good question! You can do anything you want with it, so it's like a song of mine called "Anything Could Happen." I liked the idea of makeup that could be natural for day, but also quite extreme for evening.


**When did you start wearing makeup?**

I was about 13, maybe 12. I have early memories of my mom applying lipstick and it being on all the mugs around the house. When I was at university and couldn't afford any makeup, I just had mascara and lipstick. I would use the lipstick on my mouth, cheeks, and eyes—but I obviously hadn't discovered a lot yet.

**Have you picked up any tips from friends?**

I love nothing more than doing my makeup with friends. They definitely inspire me, but I'm the tip person. I'm always teaching people how to put individual lashes on. I don't use tweezers, because it's easier with the fingers. The trick is to place them at a bit of an angle—don't lay them down flat on your lash line—so that they flare out to the sides. And don't use too much glue. I apply mascara first, because it gives the lashes something to stick to. And then after they're dry, I add a tiny bit more mascara, just on the ends—otherwise it can get messy.





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Adriana is wearing Color Sensational<sup>®</sup> The Reds Lipcolor in Red Revival.  
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**Quad Goals**  
Chanel's Vamp Attitude Les 4 Ombres Multi-Effect Quadra Eye Shadow features a spectrum of shades from soft to bold, inspired by Uma Thurman's badass look in *Pulp Fiction*.

**Notes to Self**  
With sparkling top notes of rose, bergamot, and iris—and a sensual leather dry-down—Valentino Donna eau de parfum wears like one of the label's ultrafeminine gowns.

**Smart Mouth**  
A product pair to keep you kiss-worthy: Givenchy's Mister Scrub, an easy-to-apply lip exfoliator in a tube, comes with Mister Gentlebalm, a salve that creates a custom flush according to your own pH.

## BEGIN AGAIN

A rich serum, a futuristic face mask, and a reinvented lip scrub give "the basics" a truly luxurious spin

By Ali Finney

**Sea Plus**  
A new level of luxe: Containing a rare Mediterranean algae and an amped-up version of the brand's signature Miracle Broth, La Mer The Serum Essence plumps, clarifies, and brightens.

**Fluff Piece**  
The turquoise-to-navy dip-dyed bristles in Sonia Kashuk's fluffy Domed Powder Brush will make it the coolest tool in your arsenal.

**Light Touch**  
Newly reformulated Yves Saint Laurent Beauté Touche Éclat Radiance Awakening Foundation—featuring the same illuminating pigments as the brand's iconic concealer—is both lightweight and superperfecting.

**Winning Hand**  
Essie nail lacquer in Starry Starry Night packs the glitz of Sin City into a limited-edition, thirty-fifth-anniversary polish.

**Space Anti-Age**  
GlamGlow GravityMud dries to a gel-like, reflective chrome finish to firm, illuminate, and hydrate with a mix of marshmallow, licorice extract, and hyaluronic acid.





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MAKE **IT** HAPPEN<sup>™</sup> NEW YORK



Nothing smashes confidence quite like acne, which affects up to 50 million Americans a year. Megan O'Neill reports on proven solutions to heal and prevent every eruption

#### CLEAN SWEEP

To treat the four major causes of breakouts—clogged pores, proliferating *P. acnes* bacteria, inflammation, and oil—New York-based dermatologist Arielle Kauvar, MD, suggests starting with tried and true OTC topicals that “gently exfoliate and reduce inflammation,” such as a cell-renewing glycolic acid cleanser, an allover retinol lotion for brightening, and an antibacterial benzoyl peroxide spot treatment.

When drugstore options don't do the trick, New York-based dermatologist Jennifer MacGregor, MD, prescribes antibacterial standby Aczone, a topical anti-inflammatory that “modulates the immune system by blocking an enzyme in white blood cells that would normally lead to inflammation and tissue damage.”

If spots are concentrated around the chin, elevated testosterone levels (which can cause oil production to spike) may

be the culprit. New York-based dermatologist Barney Kenet, MD, recommends birth control pills such as Ortho Tri-Cyclen and Yaz, or he prescribes Spironolactone, an antiandrogen medication that balances hormones. And while Kenet notes that “the single most effective agent in stopping acne” is still 33-year-old Accutane, he warns that it can cause “quite significant side effects, [including] birth defects if you get pregnant while using it.”

#### TECH SAVVY

An arsenal of in-office acne procedures are all designed to target the same thing: oil glands. In addition to surefire sebum-reducing treatments such as the Isolaz laser, which utilizes intense pulsed light (IPL), Beverly Hills-based dermatologist Michael Lin, MD, blasts spots with photodynamic therapy (PDT), originally used to treat some types of

skin cancer and later FDA-approved for acne. During PDT, aminolevulinic acid (ALA)—a photosensitizing chemical that becomes a potent antimicrobial when triggered by specific wavelengths of light—is applied to the skin, then activated by blue light. “It incubates for 30 minutes to an hour, killing bacteria and injuring the sebaceous glands,” Lin says. A single session of PDT can improve the complexion for up to 12 weeks.

For severe cases, Kauvar switches to red light, which “penetrates more deeply.” She also leaves the ALA solution on skin for three hours (it's usually on for an hour or less), a variation that can incur a week of intense swelling. The discomfort is worth it for some patients: After multiple sessions spaced eight weeks apart, the combo can diminish acne for up to a year.

Alternatively, radio-frequency treatments, such as Aluma or Thermage, can shrink sebaceous glands via heat. In a 2003 study published in the journal *Dermatologic Surgery*, radio frequency significantly reduced 82 percent of participants' acne in one to two sessions, spaced up to eight months apart.

When you need a spot gone in a flash, the gold standard is a quick shot of the anti-inflammatory steroid cortisol, which can shrink a blemish in under 24 hours. Postinjection, Kenet suggests dabbing on the drugstore astringent Domeboro, typically used to quell rashes, “to dry out the pimple.”

#### GOLDEN FUTURE

The next big buzzword in acne eradication? Nanotechnology. Company-sponsored trials of Sebacia, a nanopowered treatment currently pending FDA approval, have shown “a 70 percent decrease in acne sustained up to seven months after three treatment sessions a few weeks apart,” Kauvar says. Here's how it works: A lotion infused with gold-plated nanoparticles is driven deep into pores using a low-frequency ultrasound device, then targeted with diode-laser light for a photothermal effect. The result: Oil glands are shocked into submission. ●



1. NEUTROGENA On-the-Spot Acne Treatment's 2½ percent concentration of benzoyl peroxide is proven to kill bacteria.
2. It may sound counterintuitive, but moisturizing acne-prone skin is key, says Lin, whose DR. LIN SKINCARE Daily Hydrating Gel contains water-retaining hyaluronic acid.
3. With complexion-clearing retinol and tone-evening resveratrol, PCA SKIN Intensive Brightening Treatment clarifies and helps fade hyperpigmentation.
4. KATE SOMERVILLE EradiKate To-Go Acne Treatment swabs come presoaked with exfoliating AHAs to up cellular turnover.
5. SKINCEUTICALS Blemish + Age Defense serum tackles breakouts with sebum-inhibiting dioic acid.



## AJA NAOMI KING

Actress, *How to Get Away with Murder* on ABC



# BEAUTY RX

WOMEN IN TELEVISION SHARE  
THEIR BEAUTY FORMULAS



**NIGHTTIME BEAUTY REGIMEN:** You have to give the makeup artist a good base to begin with, so I take time to really take care of my skin. I thoroughly wash my face and use a great moisturizer and eye cream every night. Since my days usually entail hours of makeup, I'm incredibly conscious about using products that won't clog my pores.

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# TWO WEEKS' NOTICE

What a difference 14 days can make! Seven test subjects commit to (short-term) resolutions to extend attention span, kick a tech addiction, slim down, and jump-start positivity—to find new ways to feel bright and shiny right...this...minute!

## KILL YOUR CRAVINGS

### FILL 'ER UP

BY RACHEL BAKER

 I am always hungry. Okay, maybe not *always*, but the idea of food always sounds good—and it's hard to differentiate the two. Meanwhile, my dresses are increasingly strained across my hips. So when I encountered the textbook-size (and, in that it's packed with charts, history, and recipes, the textbook-like) *Always Hungry?*, by Harvard endocrinologist, nutritionist, and pediatrician David Ludwig, MD, PhD, well, that damn book stared me right in the thighs.

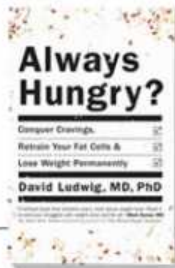
Ludwig's philosophy is that by "ignoring calories and targeting fat tissue directly"—with a low-carb diet based on "good fats," legumes, nonstarchy vegetables, and a wide array of proteins (which, as a lactose-intolerant vegetarian, is right up my alley)—you can reprogram "fat cells to release their stored calories...shifting metabolism into weight-loss mode" and eventually find your healthy set point, i.e., the weight your body "wants" to be.

Much of his argument is familiar: All calories are not created equal—processed foods are hell on insulin levels, making fat cells hold on for dear life. But Ludwig's studies struck me as exceptionally

convincing. Try this one: When two groups were fed the same number of calories—one from a low-carb menu, the other low-fat—the low-carbers burned 325 more calories per day than those on the low-fat diet. Or this: A group of obese teenage boys ate three different breakfasts: instant oatmeal, steel-cut oatmeal, and an omelet and fruit. On the days they ate the (heavily processed) instant oats, the boys not only had low blood glucose an hour after the meal—hunger alert!—but they also consumed roughly 650 more calories throughout the day.

In phase one of *Always Hungry?*—goal: "conquer cravings"—50 percent of calories come from avocado, oils, nuts, and heavy cream; 25 percent from nonstarchy vegetables and legumes; and 25 percent from lean protein (there are recipes for lamb shank! sloppy joes! turkey bacon! But in my case, that meant eggs and tofu—*lots* of eggs and tofu). In phase two—"retrain your fat cells"—which can last from weeks to months, the percentages are similar, but grains such as millet and quinoa are now on the table.

Given the two-week constraint, I never reached phase three, long-term maintenance (40 percent fat, 40 percent carbs, 20 percent protein). And throughout, something weighed on my mind, so to speak: Like so many diets, this one seems designed for junk-food hounds who have the Domino's app at the ready. What about those of us who eat whole grains and tons of veggies, but also the odd peanut butter cookie and, okay, wine, wine, and wine? Is losing a few inches worth life sans veggie tahini soba? On the other hand, while I didn't lose weight on *Always Hungry?*, I did feel great: not tired or cranky or, um, hungry, not to mention fitting better in my clothes, feeling less bloated, and, as I steadily refused the afternoon snack bar, triumphantly—if temporarily—smug.



Peter Dazeley/Getty Images



## BREAK UP WITH YOUR SMARTPHONE

# SHORT CIRCUIT

BY KEZIAH WEIR

Nearly two-thirds of Americans own a smartphone. We start early (in a 2015 study by Sprint, 69 percent of parents gave their kid a smartphone by the age of 14), and we go hard (nearly five hours a day on average). Studies have told us that the rechargeable brains in our pockets make us socially awkward. That they're a time suck. That they strain the eyes. And now we're all painfully aware of "tech neck," that oh-so-twenty-first-century wrinkle caused by staring down at a screen. (In fact, last year YSL Beauté created a product to treat this new phenomenon.) So, yeah, unplugging seemed like a worthwhile experiment. But for a young woman living in New York City without a landline, going completely phoneless felt ill-advised. So I hightailed it to Best Buy for a prepaid \$15 burner. For two weeks, I'd have no texts. No Google Maps. No swiping left!

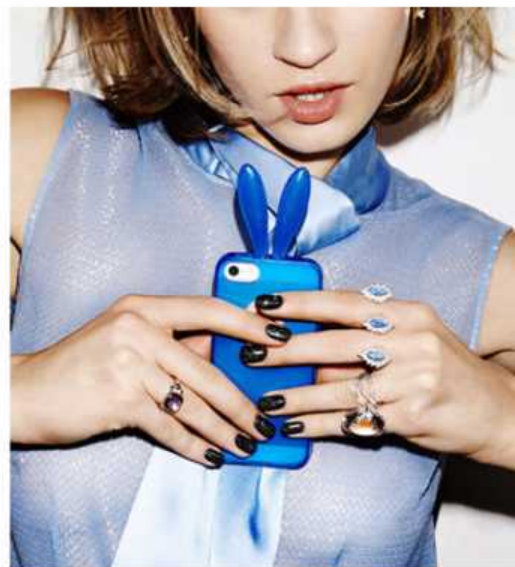
At midnight, I set the burner's alarm, ready to awake a Luddite, lost, alone. Then an odd thing happened: Not once did I wake up and check my phone, respond to texts, scroll Instagram, and then toss and turn because, as sleep researchers have been warning us for years, consuming rapid-fire bites of information triggers production of the

stress hormones cortisol and fight-or-flight adrenaline. Sans smartphone, I started...sleeping.

And now, if someone took the time to contact me, it was because they had something to say. Gone were the pointless "I'm on my way!" messages (if we agree to meet at 7 P.M., shouldn't it be assumed you're en route by 6:45?); the inane daylong back-and-forths and autocorrect miscommunications; the constant dull worry (or hope) that I'd missed a text, and the subsequent habitual phone-checking that is, by the way, the very definition of addiction. Not that I kicked the habit without withdrawal: Itching for mindless distraction, I found myself mindlessly pulling out the flip phone to check for nonexistent texts and craning over my buddies' shoulders as they swiped on Tinder.

A couple of days in, I had a *Trainwreck* moment: I was splayed on the beach with girlfriends when my burner started buzzing. Up popped the number of a guy I liked. To which I actually responded, out loud and with some anxiety: "Why is he calling me?" Well, he was calling to talk, it turned out, because he couldn't text. He's a good talker.

A few more lessons learned: One can live—and date and shop and source, say, gluten-free fish tacos—without Google Maps. One can also simply sit and *exist* while waiting for a dinner date to arrive (alternative entertainment: old-school voyeurism). And it's astounding what you hear when you take out your earphones! Meta moment: Standing



on the street waiting for a friend, I eavesdropped on two women discussing relationships that had ended via text.

The upshot? Better sleep! Less anxiety! A general sense of pleasure with the world and my part in it! When my iPhone and I were finally reunited, I imperially informed friends that I was no longer "into texting." I checked Instagram once a day, at home. Over the following weeks, my resolve weakened slightly, but my tech cleanse really did reset something in me—I just didn't need my phone in the same way I used to. And so, when I realized I was due for an upgrade, I waited *days* before moseying into Verizon. My phone was so old, after all, its screen so cracked....

"It's so big!" I exclaimed, upgrade in hand. "So shiny." Then I texted a friend the news.

From top: Jennifer Livingston; Jung Kim (4) (makeup direction by Dillon Pena at Wilhelmina Artists NY for M.A.C Cosmetics); runway, from left: Antonio de Moraes Barros Filho/WireImage/Getty Images; Imaxtree.com; Dominique Charreau/WireImage/Getty Images; Imaxtree.com

## → THE TRANSFORMER ELLE's Cotton Codinha takes far-out beauty looks from the spring 2016 collections for a real-life spin



**DAY 1 Marni: Modern Doll**  
TOOL: M.A.C False Lash RESULT: After the hour spent cutting and gluing on faux lashes, I feel like a '60s muse. The shellacked pigtales? Less Twiggy, more Fonzy. **FEEDBACK:** Colleague says I look like Samantha Parkington, American Girl doll of my youth! I thank her with more affection than I've shown anyone all week.



**DAY 2 Herve Leger by Max Azria: Milkmaid Plait**  
TOOL: Tresemme (un)Done Ultra Brushable Hairspray RESULT: The braid wraps from a deep part back to my pony; feels deliberate, pulled-together. **FEEDBACK:** Women really want to know how I did it. On elevator, cute boy sneaks glances. I explain this experiment; he asks, "Are you terribly high maintenance?"



**DAY 3 Chanel: Blue Bandit**  
TOOL: Chanel's Les 4 Ombres Multi-Effect Quadra Eyeshadow in Tissé Jazz RESULT: Kudos, Kendall Jenner. Anyone who can make a superhero-slash-sleepmask chic certainly has some sort of magic power. **FEEDBACK:** Numerous "Oh, wow"s. My roommate was thinking of wearing this look to a costume party—until she saw me: "It's not your worst...."




**DAY 4 Fendi: Double Eyebrow**  
TOOL: Dior Addict It-Line in It-Black RESULT: Margo Tenenbaum from *The Royal Tenenbaums* meets Helga from *Hey Arnold!* **FEEDBACK:** Scurrying out on an errand after 8 P.M. under cover of darkness, I run into two different male friends. Both stop to chat; both choose a focal point a foot above my head.

## MAX OUT YOUR SKIN CARE

APPLY  
YOURSELF

BY LAURIE ABRAHAM

 To offer a clue to my mind-set, the Saturday morning I stood at my sink preparing to begin a 10-step Korean skin-care routine, my first thought was, Oh good, this gives me a chance to floss. Flossing is among the basic hygiene habits I skip because I feel too busy, even though the result is bleeding gums, and even though I actually trust that it works: It'll keep my teeth from falling out! But I digress, though digression—or the thoughts that arose as I moved from Dermalogica Precleanse Wipes to Erborian Solid Cleansing Oil to Laneige Brightening Sparkling Water Foam Cleanser and so on—came to be one of the most instructive, and occasional-

ly poignant, aspects of the process.

First, a bit more background: I believe that the appearance of one's face, not to mention one's general health and longevity, is almost entirely a product of genetics. Beyond eating halfway decently (some vegetables) and not horribly abusing drugs or alcohol (emphasis on horribly), there's not much you can do to look prettier or younger, or even feel physically better. I wash my face with Cetaphil because I have sensitive skin and use a moisturizer in the morning if my face seems dry or tight. Which is not to say I don't employ certain high-impact countenance correctors: I wear mascara and foundation and blush, and I get Botox in my forehead. Results, people, *results*.

When I articulated this approach in a meeting at ELLE in which the idea of my trying the aforementioned regimen was broached, the editor in chief said: "That's all you care about, Laurie, whether it will make you look prettier or younger?"

"Yeah, basically."

"Because for Korean women, I think it's about taking care of themselves—"

"But I don't like pedicures, bubble baths with candles—all that stuff women do," I protested, my tone somewhere between derisive and bewildered.

"I think it can be meditative," she said.

"Okay. I'll try it."

You may or may not have noticed that

I expressed skepticism only about the ability to optimize one's *physical* well-being. As for emotional, I've gone to a therapist for much of my adult life, and for the last 15 years I've seen a man who is known for marrying Eastern and Western practices. While he's never pushed me to meditate, I'm pretty sure it would help curb my emotional reactivity—and thus make me a better mother, colleague, friend—but I've never been able to stay with it.

The animating force behind Korean beauty rituals is perhaps less an embrace of the meditative, says Alicia Yoon, who runs a K-beauty website called Peach and Lily, than of taking whatever time is necessary to enhance your skin's condition/appearance. "Being high maintenance is not something to brag about in America," she says. "But in Korea, if you're low maintenance, people are like, 'Why? You should take care of yourself.' It's a health thing as much as a vanity thing." My plan, nonetheless, was to treat the routine—which can be summed up as extensive cleansing followed by prodigious moisturizing, morning and night—as a meditation, proceeding slowly and, dare I say, mindfully. Online aficionados suggest taking at least 30 seconds between steps, anyway, to aid absorption.

Which is how I came to be standing at my sink on a Saturday at 11 A.M., regarding my visage a little bereftly. Perhaps it was because I had a slight hangover, perhaps because the house was so hushed—both my daughters were at their father's—perhaps because of the vulnerability evoked by this notion of treating myself, my face, with such care.

I removed a pristine white Dermalogica towelette from the package and began

**DAY 5 Public School: Megabraid**

**TOOLS:** Stila Stay All Day Waterproof Liquid Eye Liner in Intense Black; Leyla Milani Clip In Hair Extensions **RESULT:** A rattail-thin pony is still capable of being dramatically whipped. And a flick of white eyeliner plus glowy skin is very Sporty Spice, in the best way. **FEEDBACK:** Feel very "downtown ninja"; keep getting "Disney princess."

**DAY 6 DVF: Haute Tropic**

**TOOLS:** Obsessive Compulsive Cosmetics Loose Colour Concentrate in Saturate; DIY floral clip crafted from repurposed flower crown and staples **RESULT:** More frazzled theme-restaurant employee than young DVF. **FEEDBACK:** The party on my head is hard to ignore. Get a few unsolicited compliments from kindly cashiers at my lunchtime café.

**DAY 7 Kenzo: Surfer Slick**

**TOOL:** Bumble and bumble Brilliantine **RESULT:** Does slicked hair and a glossy lip equal product overload? Au contraire, it feels clean and light—very *Reality Bites*. **FEEDBACK:** Compliments all day! Note: It's incredibly hard to make "wet look" hair appear wet for hours. I cheat by intermittently splashing water on my head.

**DAY 8 Anna Sui: Glamour Goddess**

**TOOLS:** Colorlicious Lipstick in Seduce Scarlet; Perfect Point Plus Eyeliner in Black Onyx, both by CoverGirl **RESULT:** I thought sultry eyes plus red lips was verboten, but this is subtle—the liner is more graphic and minimal than a smoky eye. **FEEDBACK:** Everyone at work asks what great plans I have. "Home to catch up on Hulu," I say. They wink conspiratorially.

From top: Jonathan Storey/Getty Images; Jung Kim (4) (makeup direction by Dillon Penna at Wilhelmina Artists NY for M.A.C Cosmetics); runway, from left: Fernanda Calfat/Getty Images for NYFW; The Shows; Imaxtree.com; Victor Boyko/WireImage/Getty Images; Imaxtree.com



gently mopping my face. What a lovely Botox job I have, I thought, taking my pleasure where I could get it. Having hit all the surfaces, I tossed the cloth in the trash can under my sink. Rather, I deliberately placed it there, trying not to move too fast, trying not to break the 30-second rule on the *very first step*.

Next I unscrewed the cap of the cleansing oil with the care of a priest handling the host and was greeted by a thick, sage-green goop. I worked a dollop into my cheeks and forehead, nose and chin, in circular motions, per the instructions. It smelled so good, so fresh. I could feel the bones under my skin, my mortality at my fingertips. This is the kindest I've been to myself in a while, it suddenly occurred to me. It had been a grueling week at work. Then, still massaging: This is the kindest I've been to my face, *ever*. That seemed sad.

The third product, the foam cleanser, came squirting out of its dispenser like a featherlight shaving cream. Before rinsing, I patiently tested the water, waiting till it was neither too hot nor too cold but just right, then splashed my face in what I can only describe as a loving manner. As ridiculous as slow-motion towelette disposal, you say? Perhaps, but all I can offer is that being as good to oneself as you might be to a child or a best friend isn't easy. Yet I buy the theory of a particular kind of meditation, known as loving-kindness, namely that by embarking on a practice in which you first direct good wishes to yourself and eventually move outward to dwell on those about whom you have ungenerous thoughts (like, say, my ex-husband), you're more regularly able to bring your best self to bear in the world.

## 10-STEP PROGRAM

Adding up the author's Korean-style mega-regimen



After about a week, I began to edit my routine based on how much time I had and other state-of-my-face factors. Such "customization" is, in fact, the hallmark of the Korean method, Yoon says. (That's right; despite the branding appeal of the 10 steps, Korean women apparently don't hew to a particular number.) For instance, while the Crème Scrub Beautifying Exfoliating Pearls, also by Erborian, was nothing like the hardcore scraper I remembered from the zit-patrol days of my youth—the marketing language likening its active ingredient to "micro-pearls that...gently roll over the surface of the skin" is only slightly hyperbolic—I decided it was still too

much for morning and night application. Ditto, three-step cleansing when I hadn't worn makeup. And while I fell asleep wearing the moisturizing sheet masks a couple of times—*The Phantom of the Opera*, supine—and awoke feeling sublimely moist, I couldn't do that every night. What if I had a boyfriend?

Even when I was pressed for time, I tried to stay in the moment as I scoured and lubed. I appreciated the scents and textures of the various unguents, as well as how neatly I'd aligned them on my countertop! When I did do the long-form version—45 minutes—I moved away from the sink between steps to actually sit for a short loving-kindness meditation



**DAY 9** *Libertine: Graphic Goth*  
**TOOL:** Revlon Colorstay Liquid Eye Pen in Blackest Black **RESULT:** It would take a master's in makeup application to do liner this crisp. Mine's more Courtney Love goes to art class. **FEEDBACK:** Is it just my imagination, or are people on the subway unusually rude? I get a lot of jostling and eye-rolling usually reserved for petulant teenagers.



**DAY 10** *House of Holland: Cali Girl*  
**TOOL:** Maybelline New York Fit Me! Matte + Poreless Foundation in Rich Tan **RESULT:** Full-on foundation plus bronzer sounded simple, but felt like the most dramatic look of all. With tawny new skin tone, feel like someone else's head is on my body. **FEEDBACK:** "You look like everyone I went to high school with," sniffs an editor friend, "when we were still teenagers."



**DAY 11** *Sally LaPointe: Silver Bullet*  
**TOOLS:** Mixing Medium Shine; Pigment in Silver, both by M.A.C **RESULT:** The sequin sparkles on my bare face with the jauntiness of an eyebrow ring. Feel 10 times cooler immediately. **FEEDBACK:** At the musical *Hamilton*, date doesn't spot sequin until intermission, by which time it's fallen, leaving a thick comet-tail of silver paint behind.



**DAY 12** *Miu Miu: Paper-Bag Princess*  
**TOOL:** Nars Audacious Lipstick in Bette **RESULT:** It's hard not to blend a two-tone lip! I blot just the sides, leaving a darker, vaguely Elizabethan, center. **FEEDBACK:** A friend asks to borrow my lipstick for an event that night; attempts to pocket it as she goes. But most of the focus is on my tiara—which just doesn't want to stay put. Props to you, Princess Kate.

(may I be happy; may I be healthy; may I be free). I was continually surprised at how difficult it was to focus on showing compassion toward myself. To be clear, I'm not the stereotypical low-self-esteem type who feels perpetually ineffective or unloved, but still, I struggled.

When I'd start, I'd immediately notice my face relaxing, dropping—the other kind of mask, I suppose. Sometimes I had an image of patting myself on the head, as if I were a child: There, there, Laurie, you're okay. Not exactly a rousing endorsement. Other times, I thought: I try to be a good person, I try to be a good mother, I try.... And I do, but in my mind, this registered as a plaintive plea to be recognized for my effort, not as a statement of fact. Again, kind of sad.

I feel compelled to report on my physiognomic status after two weeks of this. First, my skin felt softer and seemed to cry out for moisturizer (the Boscia Sake Balm *is* the bomb). I've conquered my teenage fear of putting oil my face, and I was moved to ask our beauty editor to help me pick out a foundation that really matches my skin: You can't treat your face like a masterwork and then just slather on any old thing. I also turned up a great bronzing powder, by Guerlain.

Any of these developments could account for the fact that I stepped in the elevator a few days ago and was pronounced “glowy” by an acquaintance. I do not think, however, that my appearance has changed appreciably. Botox, this isn't. On the other hand, the true impact of such intense skin care can only be measured over time, except I won't know the answer even then. I mean, who knows what my face would look like at 75 if I hadn't kept applying the battery of lotions and oils? It's like the inverse of when my mother-in-law told my ex that surely her light drinking during pregnancy hadn't harmed him. “Look at how smart you are,” she said. “Just think how smart I could've been,” he replied.

Speaking of my ex, I'm not yet directing much loving-kindness his way, but the other day on the subway, a stranger slumped against me, fast asleep. I just sat there, feeling conspicuous at first, then considering how bone-tired the man must be to do this, how hard his life probably was, and noticing the heaviness of the human body, the warmth. When my stop came, I extricated myself without rousing him and laid him down gingerly on the seat.

## PRESS PLAY ON POSITIVITY

# C'MON GET HAPPY

BY BEN DICKINSON

Lately I've considered that reading the newspaper on my smartphone during the morning commute is perhaps not the best prescription for mental health. The Buddha observed that the world is a house on fire; the existentially merciless Romanian philosopher E. M. Cioran opined that “the need for novelty is the characteristic of an alienated gorilla.” On both counts, digesting the sorry state of the world before I even reach my desk may not yield an optimal state of mind by any definition. I resolved therefore to spend two weeks adhering to an alternative regimen: I'd listen to a podcast about positive psychology while gazing around at my fellow subway congregants, an efflorescence of humanity that I habitually ignore.

Under the heading of “positive psychology,” iTunes lists 64 available podcasts; I very unscientifically but, I think, understandably settled on *The Positive Psychology Podcast*, which is “about the stuff that usually only tree huggers have the courage to embrace: appreciation of beauty, positive emotions, gratitude or positive relationships.” It's generated by Kristen Truempy, a bright, unassuming young psychologist based in Zurich, Switzerland.

Truempy starts from the principle that optimism can be learned: Consciously applying positive thinking can wean us from pessimism and bring us to a happier state of mind, and indeed a physically healthier state of being. In episodes ranging from barely 10 minutes

to almost an hour, Truempy reviews the reigning observations and concepts underlying this basic theory, and she interviews various experts who elucidate particular aspects of how it works. It must be said that a lot of the advice has a familiar, even hallowed ring—but it's no less valuable for that. To wit: Suppressing negative emotions is counterproductive (faking it *isn't* making it), but genuine positivity is contagious; happiness, therefore, is not selfish—expressing it is actually an act of generosity. Quitting any bad habit is more constructively pursued by changing the structure of your environment and routines than by simply attempting to apply your willpower. The ideal productive state is “flow,” when you are so absorbed that you lose track of time. Resilience is to a great degree about regulating your emotions, controlling your impulses, and keeping a critical eye on that pessimistic streak you have: Consciously telling yourself to be patient while getting off a crowded train or waiting for that oldster to count out change in front of you at the cashier will substantively get you to a better place in your own mind (and maybe prevent you from acting like a jackass).

In hearing Truempy out while casting my eye around the A train, I did find myself feeling lastingly more solicitous about my fellow travelers—and about people in general (which has to be a good thing, right?). After all, I was listening to what amounted to a clear and thorough description of how damn hard it is for each of us to roll that stone up the hill every day and how challenging it is to simply live an ordinary life as gracefully as possible. Now, I might in the long run prefer to trade Truempy's friendly coaching for a few good, palate-cleansing aphorisms from Cioran (example: “Skepticism is the sadism of embittered souls”). But maybe that's just me.



Jordan Siemens/Getty Images



## REBOOT YOUR BRAIN

A STITCH  
IN TIME

BY LOUISA KAMPS

Over a hectic month last fall, boneheadedness brought me low. I spaced on a long-awaited cocktail party. I baked cookies but forgot the *sugar*. And clicking quickly through a deceptively designed ticket-broker's website, I forked over hundreds more than the tickets would have cost had I been paying closer attention. Was I slipping?

Seventy million people have already logged on to brain-game hub Lumosity in an attempt to sharpen their attention by, say, steering digital trains into stations, and boost their memories by matching colored tile patterns. Best-selling gray-matter apps such as CogniFit and Brain Games work similarly; Elevate offers an exercise said to encourage brevity

in conversation by having users trim unnecessary words from sentences—one that my editors, I'm sure, would love me to try. But an October 2014 statement released by the Stanford Center for Longevity and the Max Planck Institute denounced the billion-dollar cognitive-fitness industry, saying it does little more than help people score higher on brain-training games themselves—no solid studies confirm an improvement in real-world activities, such as balancing a checkbook or finding a novel solution for a thorny work problem.

Besides, psychologists say that being able to tolerate frustration, even boredom—windows where self-reflection and empathetic imagination thrive—is essential for creativity: “People take time to think, and then they think of something new,” explains MIT clinical psychologist Sherry Turkle.

So in order to sharpen my mental acuity, I recently started...quilting. Yes, quilting! Participants in a University of

Texas at Dallas study who spent three months learning to quilt or use complex photo-editing software to improve their own digital photography (versus those who spent the same amount of time—about 16 hours a week—socializing with friends or doing word puzzles) experienced lasting improvements in memory. A study in *Psychological Science* posited that challenging new tasks like these activate multiple brain networks and require them to operate in concert, and that regularly getting outside what one researcher called your “comfort zone” and inside your “enhancement zone”—i.e., hauling your brain to the gym, rain or shine—holds promise for staving off dementia. (I'm not there yet but, you know, time flies.) So one afternoon I laid out denim scraps on my kitchen table. Over the next two weeks, I stitched for three hours on weekend days and an hour on weeknights, becoming more and more engrossed—pleasantly and, yes, unpleasantly—in my humble attempt to replicate the beautiful Japanese style of quilting known as *boro*. Did I feel any sparky interconnectivity? While writing another story, I did notice a connection between two seemingly unrelated ideas, and I nestled them side-by-side in a quiltlike way that highlighted their sly similarity. And after outsourcing so much judgment to Siri, it felt refreshing to plan and problem-solve with my own prefrontal cortex and get a grip on the world (well, pointy needles and unruly threads, anyway) with my bare hands. My quilt is far from finished. But I'm hooked—and already my brain feels brighter for it.

## → OUTSMART THE GYM

Eric Salvador, the ex-Marine head instructor of cult NYC high-intensity-training gym The Fhitting Room, lays down the law on how to get real results in two weeks

### 1. PUSH IT REAL GOOD

Yes, you can realistically drop five pounds and firm up noticeably without spending hours a day sweating it out. A daily 30-minute workout—and refraining from “eating crap”—will do it, Salvador says, but “you’re going to be out of breath.” Studies have shown that pro athlete-beloved high-intensity interval training (HIIT), with bursts of all-out, heart-pumping cardio and strength training cut with brief recovery periods (for example, two minutes on, 30 seconds off, repeat), elevates excess post-exercise oxygen

consumption (EPOC) more than lengthier endurance-based sessions. Translation: To torch more calories and fat, even after the workout is over, stop jogging and start sprinting.

### 2. COMPLICATE THINGS

Opt for compound movements—say, a lateral lunge combined with an overhead arm extension, or a squat-and-dumbbell-press combo—that “use more muscles and more body parts.” Similarly, swap exercise machines that work a single muscle group for running stairs, for example, which works from

head to toe and combines cardio and strength training.

### 3. LOW IMPACT ISN'T WIMPY

Having spent years watching clients get sidelined by hip and knee injuries and plantar fasciitis after running on a treadmill with poor form, Salvador recommends equally challenging (yet still full-body) low-impact options, such as the sweat-inducing rowing machine and the ski machine, which “get the heart rate up without pounding the pavement.”

### 4. GET A MEANER BIKE

The assault bike (or the “devil’s bike,” as Salvador calls it) looks like an old-school stationary fan bike, except you’re pumping your arms *and* pedaling. “You’ll feel like you have nothing left,” he says.

### 5. YES, BURPEES HURT

But you have to do them. “The burpee is the equalizer for every man or woman, tall or small, fit or not.” Doing 20 seconds on, 10 seconds off for four minutes total “will leave you on the floor.” —Ali Finney

# READER



Kia Corthron in New York City

## POLITICAL? CORRECT.

For years Kia Corthron's plays about homelessness, race, and violence have made her an artistic anomaly. But with a masterful debut novel and major prizes under her belt, it seems the culture has finally caught up to her. By Lisa Shea

A hundred pages or so into African American playwright, television writer, and now novelist Kia Corthron's powerhouse, 789-page debut, *The Castle Cross the Magnet Carter* (Seven Stories Press), you meet one of the book's four main characters, an irrepressible, cross-eyed six-year-old black boy named Eliot. "I

got nine lives!" he exults to his older brother Dwight, who is, in Eliot's lingo, "always drawrin." The two black boys, whose father is a Pullman porter, come of age in a hardscrabble town in western Maryland during World War II. At the same time, two white boys, clever Randall and his deaf older brother, B.J., are growing up in Alabama Ku Klux Klan country, where their father works in a sawmill. Their lives will intersect in an unimaginably violent and yet all too plausible event in 1960, as the book moves relentlessly forward from 1941 through the postwar era and then the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War, the Reagan years, 9/11, and beyond.

Who publishes a 789-page first novel these days? Who even publishes a 789-page novel? Most—maybe all—of the

modern Big American Novels have been by white-guy meta-novelists: David Foster Wallace, Jonathan Franzen, and, lately, Joshua Cohen. But *Magnet Carter* qualifies as a full-blown saga, with historical scope and a literary heartbeat, and uses the trajectories of its characters' lives from 1941 to 2010 to illustrate the human cost of America's legacy of slavery. It's daring, poetic, and unapologetically political.

"It's hard to think of anyone writing today who risks like she does, in terms of subject matter or complexity of attack," writes Todd London, the former artistic director of the New York playwrighting lab and workshop New Dramatists, in a 2014 essay about Corthron. "Along with Kia's political commitment comes her huge capacity for empathy. She lovingly creates her characters out of her singular awareness that people are always larger than their environment and more rounded than any stereotype permits. I think of her precocious, research-obsessed project-dwelling teenagers in *Splash Hatch on the E Going Down* and *Seeking the Genesis* or, in *Breath, Boom*, the violent girl-gang leader with an almost scholarly obsession with fireworks. Likewise, in *Light Raise the Roof*, there's the homeless builder of shacks for other homeless people, a man on fire with the study of architecture. *A Cool Dip in the Barren Saharan Crick* overflows with the facts about American water use and sub-Saharan drought, and the characters' engagement with those facts drives the action. Every one of Kia's people has within her the capacity to think deeply, expansively, and critically about our society."

All of the qualities of her plays—some 15 of which have been produced at the likes of the Manhattan Theatre Club and Playwrights Horizons in New York, Chicago's Goodman Theatre, London's Royal Court Theatre, Los Angeles's Mark Taper Forum, and Minneapolis's Guthrie Theater—are present in the book, which in addition to being political is also funny, emotionally capacious, and dramatic, and squares with Corthron's character.

We meet at Il Caffe Latte, rays of gold-lit autumn sunshine slanting in through

Photographed by Matt Coats (styled by Anatoli Smith); hair and makeup by Holly Gowers at De Facto for Diorskin; Cotton shirt, Karen Millen. Wool-angora trousers, Maison Margiela. Sneakers, Adidas Originals. For details, see Shopping Guide



the open floor-to-ceiling front windows of the neighborhood spot in New York's Harlem, where Corthron has lived since 1995. She's never been married and has no children, but for years she has lived with a roommate. "Sharing an apartment is a choice," Corthron says. "I consider it a privilege to do my art every day as opposed to doing a 40-hour-a-week job. I used to always call myself a poor little spoiled girl." In 2006 she actually turned down an invitation to write for the show *The Wire*, after writing an episode during season four that was called "Know Your Place." That episode won her a Writers Guild Award and an Edgar Award. "One episode, two trophies!" is how she gleefully sums up her contribution.

As I maneuver to fit *The Castle Cross the Magnet Carter* onto our tiny table, Corthron watches my struggle, looks amused, and exclaims, "I didn't know it was going to be an epic-length book!" She is tall and slender with majestic sea-green eyes, her hair cascading in long, intricate braids. Her voice is energetic and high-pitched—more like a young girl's than a 54-year-old woman's.

She started writing the novel in 2010 during a lull in her theater work. The five-year endeavor was slow and fast—during some stretches she wrote 100 pages a month. So why a novel? "The short answer is...length," she answers cheekily. "A play is a two-hour snapshot." Major publishing houses asked for drastic cuts to the manuscript or wanted to bring it out as a trilogy. But Corthron did not budge.

Meanwhile, the lull was taking a heavy physical and financial toll. "By the spring of 2014," she confides, "I was so broke that I needed to apply for Medicaid for surgery." With no commissions and her novel still seeking a publisher, she received the surprise of her professional life in March: a phone call informing her she'd been chosen to receive Yale University's prestigious \$150,000 Windham-Campbell Literature Prize. Shortly thereafter she was awarded the \$50,000 United States Artists Fellow in Theater prize. And in September 2014, her 1,200-page manuscript of *The Castle Cross the Magnet Carter* was accepted by Seven Stories. Corthron cut 400 pages. "It cost me my blood and my sweat, but not my tears," she says.

"It was her theater work that she was nominated for," says Michael Kelleher, the Windham-Campbell program director. "There's a whole spectrum of political writing that runs the gamut from agit-prop to great literature. It's difficult to be as political as she is without reducing your work to simple didacticism. Kia's work

is great literature." He adds, "We didn't even know she was working on a novel."

"When I first read it, I was stunned. It's a haunting and devastating tale, leavened with humor and hope," says the award-winning, dedicatedly political playwright Naomi Wallace, who recently completed a residency at Manhattan's Signature Theatre overseeing productions of three of her plays. "I believe [*The Castle Cross the Magnet Carter*] is the most important piece of writing about twentieth-century America since James Baldwin's *Another Country*."

Equally central to the stark political, racial, and socioeconomic realities of Corthron's vision are the striking poetics of her language, which mixes erudition with vernacular with bold imagery, all beautifully cadenced. Here's Eliot speaking from the imaginative fluency of his inner life: "Afternoon I lie in my yard, close my eyes, warm sun. Smell. Spring! I got nine lives. I got me an Mama an Dwight an Daddy, that's one. I got Colored Street, I got school, that's three. I got the mulberry tree by myself, that's four, the more lives you got, the longer you live, I live old like Mesusalah!"

"I don't know where I get my funny language from, but it's influenced by where I grew up.... It has a lot of rhythms. It's music," Corthron has said.

Her skill at navigating the color line took shape in the mostly white factory town of Cumberland, Maryland. Kia's father, James, was a shift worker at the local paper mill who worked his way up to managing the shipments office. He'd bring home paper and pencils, tools of the trade that Kia and her older sister, Kim, employed to draw pictures and write. A third sister, Kara, the youngest of the three, is herself a playwright and novelist.

"Black children could be assumed to be slow where I grew up," Corthron says. "But I started school already knowing how to read. At my kindergarten screening it was apparent that I was very bright!" She claps her hands, an emphatic gesture that seems a physical declaration of her delight in righteous storytelling.

James Corthron worked six days a week, but he drove his daughters to school on bitter winter days. He died at age 51 of a brain aneurysm. Kia says that she thought her father literally worked himself to death. "He used to work 10-hour days, and sometimes he'd go 13 or 14 days without a day off," she told the *New York Times* in 2001. "And my mother said that he would train these white men 20 years his junior to be his bosses. He would do their jobs when they weren't

there, but they would never promote him." Corthron's mother, Shirley, a homemaker, died in 2005. *The Castle Cross the Magnet Carter* is dedicated to them both.

At the heart of Corthron's writing is the experience of being *other*. On scholarships, grants, and loans, she attended the University of Maryland. But it was after graduating, when she was selected for a one-year playwrighting workshop at George Washington University, that she found her *métier*. She was then accepted into the MFA in playwrighting program at Columbia University, where she earned her degree in 1992.

At Columbia, "the school's mainly white students would say things in front of me and *forget* that I was black! Once, when I was walking with a group of classmates, a friend of one of them said, 'I was sitting on the subway the other day and a black man sat right next to me.' Another time, after a little too much wine, one student asked me, 'Are you just going to keep writing more black plays about black women?' These were people who were progressive, liberal." The head of her program singled her out among the students, saying, "Kia is the political artist among us." Corthron adds, "For the first time, I thought: I'm an anomaly."

When I ask her to elaborate, she takes a long view on a topic that, among intellectuals and creative types, has its believers and its debunkers. "Political art had become suspect after the McCarthyism of the 1950s. It felt that way until September 11th happened. After that, writers I knew looked at their work and felt it didn't have meaning. At the time it confused me, because my work had always had meaning; 9/11 didn't change my writing."

"Her plays are tough," agrees Todd London, now the executive director of the University of Washington School of Drama. "I find them amazing and invigorating and groundbreaking, but she has tough things to say."

Critics of Corthron have sometimes employed a phrase—"the trouble with Kia Corthron"—when talking about her work; they say she stuffs too many big, hard ideas into her plays. But it seems that the culture, post-9/11, may be approaching her level. For example, she says, consider Black Lives Matter. "Thank God for Black Lives Matter. It's a movement, not a moment." She's traveled to Liberia, Palestine, and Alaska on writing and research fellowships, where she's met with people marginalized by poverty, race, class, gender, geography, and war. Wallace, who met Corthron in 2002 during a sponsored trip to Palestine with four

CONTINUED ON PAGE 133

A photograph of a person standing in a forest, looking out at a lake. The person is silhouetted against the bright light of the lake. The forest is composed of tall, thin trees. The ground is covered in fallen leaves and pine needles.

# TRAIL OF TERROR

In some of our most beloved best-sellers, women embark on insane adventures and come back transformed. Molly Langmuir tells a more complicated tale about putting yourself in peril

The tram from Teton Village takes nine minutes to travel 2.4 miles of wire, and as it speeds upward, Wyoming's Jackson Hole valley opens up endlessly behind you. Then the sliver of the Snake River appears, and Route 191 with its tiny ant cars, and the snowcapped Gros Ventre Range beyond that. By the time you are deposited at the top of Rendezvous

Mountain on the edge of Grand Teton National Park, you are 4,139 feet above where you started, which was already 6,311 feet above sea level.

The first time I rode the tram I was 26 and with my mom, who was visiting while I lived in Jackson for the summer, interning at the local paper, reporting on events like the county fair demolition derby and the annual Slim Lawrence Barbecue. At the top we got off and looked around, watched as a man proposed to his girlfriend, then rode back down.

The second time, six years later, I was alone. It was mid-September, and I was carrying a backpack meant to contain everything I'd need for the next three nights. Next to me was an older woman. Wasn't I worried going out alone, she asked, and in the fall, when the bears are most active? Before I could answer,

her daughter, who was decked out in Gore-Tex and had the compact frame and weathered face of a local, rolled her eyes conspiratorially. "I'm sure she knows exactly what she's doing," she said, smiling, as if to communicate that to people like us—experienced outdoor types—a few days out in the mountains is no big thing. I smiled back and stayed silent: The tram ride wasn't nearly long enough to explain all the ways this was exactly the opposite of the truth.

I'd never been backpacking alone. In the previous 10 years, I'd spent one night camping out with a boyfriend. I had not planned out my meals; I'd put batteries that had been in my freezer for years in my headlamp (it promptly died); and while the ranger I'd spoken to had told me that because of bears, I should do all my cooking 100 yards from where

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I slept, I had no idea how far that was. It felt like the trip had been planned by some shadow part of myself, while my conscious mind was watching and wondering, What the hell are you thinking? Even my original decision to go had happened in a kind of fugue state, late one night after a few glasses of wine. Three weeks later, I was at the top of Rendezvous, stepping off the tram.

To the south, the ski resort's manicured trails, covered in bright-green grass, flowed down to the base. To the north were the Tetons, a mountain range that rises so jaggedly and preposterously out of the plains that it looks like a wall of rock abruptly separating the navigable world—with its roads and people and cell phones and stores—from a realm so wild it seems preternatural.

That was the direction I started walking, down a wide dirt road that soon became a thin rocky path surrounded by

distant friends, to go with me to Big Sky Country. I loved the dramatic volatility of the weather, the old saloons, the cowboys, and the faded lettering on the brick buildings. And I'd felt that way since that summer at the *Jackson Hole News & Guide*, despite feeling fairly isolated. I'd rented a room from a single mom and spent the nights sleeping on her prepubescent son's airplane-patterned sheets—he was staying with his dad—and the weekends hiking with his spastic corgi, Tucker, a dog I only managed to tire out once, on an uncharacteristically hot day, when I carried him home slung around my neck like a towel. The loneliness permeating my existence only subsided when I went into the mountains. Driving away at the end of August, I already had a yearning to return.

The thought of camping alone, though, was daunting. My mountaineering skills were basically nonexistent, but living there I'd at least learned enough to

a little deeper into at least one fear, the others would lift. That always seemed to be the promise of books like *Wild*, the ones where a woman tests her limits and returns transformed.

At one level, I knew that life doesn't often offer such neat conclusions, but the idea that change might be simply a matter of finding the right peril had long been appealing. I'd sought out fear since childhood, if not always consciously. I was a fairly sheltered, sensitive kid, and facing up to the things that made me nervous seemed a reasonable strategy to try to loosen their grip. But as I grew older, I was afraid not only of the dark and cartoons and the color red (which, for a few years, I inexplicably believed represented the devil, my decidedly unreligious upbringing notwithstanding), but also of drugs and unstable men—and I pursued both with nihilistic relentlessness.

The summer I was 15 was when I

## THE FIRST DAY, I IMAGINED BEARS WATCHING ME, STALKING ME, SNIFFING ME DOWNWIND FROM MILES AWAY.

subalpine bushes, then dipped over the edge of a ridge into a forest of tall spruces. The noise of the day-trippers, of the waffle restaurant at the top of Rendezvous, faded behind me, replaced with just the sound of my boots crunching on the ground and, intermittently, the wind rushing through the evergreens, the shrill cry of a hawk. And suddenly the fear I'd kept at bay became impossible to ignore. It pervaded my senses, so buzzing and intense it was almost electric.

Ever since I'd booked my flight, I'd worried this might happen. I distinctly recalled a hike I'd taken the summer I lived in Jackson that ended with me running the last mile back to the trailhead, terrified about being caught out after dark, trapped as if in a dystopian fairy tale with woods full of nighttime terrors.

But how long could such acute fear last? I told myself, pushing on. It has to burn itself out after a few hours, right? Especially since the real risks, I knew, were manageable. I wasn't running covert missions in a war zone. I was camping. As I walked, though, the first hour and the next, the fear did not diminish. It surrounded me like a dense fog, leaving room for nothing else.

I didn't originally intend to embark on some sort of solo spirit challenge. For a few years, I'd unsuccessfully tried to convince my boyfriend, my close friends, then my

understand that backpacking by yourself, when you're inexperienced, is not just unadvisable but reckless—every year, people die in the Tetons and the nearby Bridger-Teton National Forest. In the winter they get hypothermia, or they're buried under avalanches. In the summer they fall off cliffs, get hit by lightning, and are attacked by bears—black bears and grizzlies. And while the latter is rare, as the “Be Bear Aware” section of my guidebook informed me: “A large percentage of hikers mauled by bears were hiking alone.” But a year earlier, in 2012, like everyone else, I'd read *Wild*. If Cheryl Strayed could handle three months, I could manage four days.

At least, that's what I told people. The more complicated and slightly embarrassing truth was that part of me desired not merely a sliver of Strayed's adventure but the full trajectory, or as full as could be had in under a week. Which feels a little like admitting I watched a romantic comedy and decided that if I followed the same career path as the heroine, true love would magically appear.

My life was a bit of a mess. I had an entry-level job that was going nowhere, and I occasionally experienced bursts of emotion so painful I'd fantasize about dying. I was afraid to take chances in my work, afraid of being sad, afraid of being numb, afraid of people being angry at me. Maybe, I thought, if I delved

went from smoking my mother's purloined cigarettes to staying away from home for days, getting high on whatever I could find, befriending ravers who'd drop 10 hits of acid at once, and getting into cars with strange men. The spark was the disintegration of my parents' marriage; my mother and I fought constantly while my father seemed to be receding into the distance. At first I thought they'd do something, try to stop my rash behavior, but they never did, and I eventually understood they never would, which was both liberating and horrifying. After a while, I became so removed from things that seemed to matter to other people—friendship, death, my general well-being—that I often felt like an alien. Fear, though, broke through. Feeling afraid was better than feeling nothing.

Like millions of other adrenaline junkies, I loved the rush of walking toward what scared me, the way it made life more vivid and ruthlessly focused my attention on the here and now. Also, surviving a threatening situation—whether it was moving to Venezuela after high school for a teaching job or jumping into the jeep of a guy who pulled up beside me a few weeks after I'd arrived in the country—dependably left me feeling more confident. The problem was, the dangers I courted rarely felt as alarming as the disquiet inside of me, which both

CONTINUED ON PAGE 133



# ASK E. JEAN

Hooking up, coming unhinged, and generalized wishy-washitude: this month, lots of dating high anxiety

## LOVE IN THE TIME OF TINDER

DEAR E. JEAN: *I'm 29 years old, and I still have no idea how to show a man that I'm interested in him. (No surprise: I've only had one actual boyfriend.) I maintain high standards regarding men showing me interest, but my subtlety in returning the interest (such as a Facebook like) is so subtle that it's barely noticeable.*

*How do I get better at this? There's a new guy I'd like to start dating. I'd like to be his girlfriend. I'm not stupid. I know what to do. I just can't bring myself to do it. Friends have given me the exact words to say, but when it's time for me to say them, I cower. I just freeze!*

*I've already slept with this guy a few times, so what signal does he need from me to let him know I'm into him—yes for the sex, but beyond that, too? I've lost some great potential boyfriends to women who are much more aggressive. So my real question is, How do I show interest without coming off like a fool?*

—Stumped

STUMPED, MY CHARMING LITTLE CHURRO: Bah. If you want to win at love, you must be willing to look like a fool. Send him this text: "Snacks. Thursday. 8:30 Balthazar. It's a date."

With seven words, you'll have made three things absolutely clear:

1. You like him.
2. You hope he likes you.
3. You're suggesting an official date.

*[Readers who've been roaring indignantly since reading the final paragraph of your letter may now return to their accustomed suavity and decorum.]*

**POSTSCRIPT:** Of course, Miss Stumped, you would never have to make a move if our asinine hookup culture

hadn't created "backward dating"—first you mate, then you date—a delicious idea when you wish to bang in the begonias like a bridesmaid on a spree, but bad if you're looking for a sweet (or dark, eh?) romance.

Nor, I suspect, would you have to send this text if we didn't live in Tinderland. Now, I like Tinder. I recommend Tinder. Hell, I'm *on* Tinder. Tinder is terrible, great, brilliant, dumb. But because Tinder makes these very fast hookups possible, *after* we hook up, to protect ourselves from rejection, we turn off the enticing, inborn, man-slaying courtship signals that Mother Nature spent 3 billion years developing—we turn them off, I say, just in case the chap doesn't like us as much as we like him, because we don't want, as you say, to come off "like a fool."

And so where does that leave us? *[Cover your ears, readers. Auntie Eeee is about to start cursing.]* It leaves us with you having to fucking text the fucking idiot and blatantly tell him, Dude! Let's date! Damn!

As Miss Jane Austen says: This is fucking nuts! Or, uh, I believe the exact quote is: "We can all *begin* freely—a slight preference is natural enough; but there are very few of us who have heart enough to be really in love without encouragement."

## A DOCTOR WITH BORDERS

DEAR E. JEAN: *I'm a short girl.*

*For some reason, everyone feels the urge to remind me of it. It's exhausting; sometimes it even hurts. I don't understand why I have to constantly hear: "Oh my God! You're so short!" I know I'm short. Am I surrounded by peo-*

*ple with the social skills of preschoolers? Please help me get over it, or suggest a comeback!*

—Love, A Gorgeous, but Short, Medical Resident

DR. GORGEOUS, TAKE PITY: Where is your compassion? Where is your mercy? Show a little ruth for the tall women of the world—the giantesses! The Gargantuas! The models! Gisele Bündchen! You've studied quantum theory. What runs the universe? Subatomic particles. Viz, short bodies.

But because so many half-wits do not grok this fact, you may respond with one of the following to the cretins who clamor, "You're so short!":

### The Lewis Carroll

"Yes, I know! I know! I'm short! But you see, I was chasing this rabbit who had a large pocket watch and I tumbled down this rabbit hole, and there was a bottle that said DRINK ME, and I did, and so I've been wondering, do you have any...mushrooms?"

### The J.R.R. Tolkien

"Ah, yes. I'm short. But like the Hobbit, I can eat seven meals a day."

### The Destruction of the Planet

"Short, forsooth! My carbon footprint is half the size of yours!"

## EXERCISE THAT PHOBIA

DEAR E. JEAN: *I've managed to do the impossible. After years of bad luck with men, karma has decided my debt to the universe has been paid, and a man finally found me attractive enough to agree to be seen with me in broad daylight.*

Gregg Delman (styled by Christian Siriole; hair by Eduardo Carrasco at Ford Artists NYC; makeup by Sylwia Rakowska at Ford Artists NYC)



*I'm not going to let my hopes get too high, but this fellow did invite me to dinner. However, I have a phobia about eating in public, particularly in front of men. Years as a fat woman have given me intense anxiety about my caloric intake, and I won't consume anything more than a bottle of water in front of anyone. I've already suggested alternate plans to avoid restaurants, but I have no idea how to evade this forever. I'm 26, old enough to figure it out, but is there a reasonable route to conquering my fear?*

—*Not on a Pedestal...Yet*  
(P.S. Never mind. The guy just canceled.)

MISS PEDESTAL, MY PAMPLEMOUSSE: We'll get to Mr. Just-Canceled in a minute. First, allow me to shake your hand. If you're going to *have* a phobia, by God, a dining-and-dating phobia is one of the best.

The Dinner Date, with its ghastly gulf between the heart-racing romantic vi-

sion of splitting a grilled cheese with Sir Galahad and the frenzied reality of being stuck at a table staring for an hour and a half into the panic-stricken eyes of a stranger who's wearing a suit two sizes too big, is one of the chief reasons so much marvelous food is delivered to so many people who are too distraught to taste it.

hour, and squeeze the phobia out of your brain by taking an action, repeating it daily until it becomes second nature, and then moving on to the next action—something like:

Week 1. Sit at a table in Starbucks.

Week 2. Sit at a table in Starbucks and write on your laptop.

Week 3. Sit at a table in Starbucks and write on your laptop and drink a bottle of water.

Week 4. Sit at a table in Starbucks and write on your laptop and drink a cup of coffee (tea, etc.).

Week 5. Sit at a table in Starbucks and write on your laptop and drink a cup of coffee (tea, etc.) and eat an oatmeal cookie.

Week 6. Sit at a table in Starbucks with a friend and drink coffee (tea, etc.) and eat oatmeal cookies, and so forth and so on, gradually exposing yourself to what you dread in a controlled way, until you're slathering butter on a bis-

*in the capital of the world? I'll be starting my career, looking for a job and moving to New York this spring from West Virginia.*

—*Ink and the City*

MISS INK, MY SPOT: Tattoos mean diddly-squat. To throw down in New York, it's all about hustle, determination, luck, focus, dressing right, sucking up, and who you know. You can get off that bus from West Virginia covered in tattoos from eyelids to pubis and become more successful than all the people getting off all the buses in Manhattan. But if you're not driven to become a legend, stay where you are.

P.S.: I just looked you up. Your ink is as if infused into your arms by Dido, Queen of the Elves. Quite, quite extraordinary. You have the stuff, my girl!

## OR, JUST GROW A PAIR

DEAR E. JEAN: *I'm a guy. I recently ran into an old friend (and former colleague), and*

**Q:** I've been in and out of love with several men, but I've been told by a psychic that I'd marry a foreigner, and I can't get it out of my head! Should I wait?

**A:** All men are foreigners. Go get one.

sion of splitting a grilled cheese with Sir Galahad and the frenzied reality of being stuck at a table staring for an hour and a half into the panic-stricken eyes of a stranger who's wearing a suit two sizes too big, is one of the chief reasons so much marvelous food is delivered to so many people who are too distraught to taste it.

So let's cut to the dessert:

A lady on a date is always more fascinating *walking* than sitting. A stroll through the park, the zoo, the botanical garden, the local dump—where witty or deep comments can be made about the passing dogs, people, fashions, rats, etc., while *not* plopping down on your best asset—is almost as good as simultaneous orgasm.

If you never went *near* a restaurant the rest of your life, Miss Pedestal, it would be fine with me. However, why limit yourself? You could see a therapist who specializes in treating phobias (many of which are relatively easy to fix), or you could take control of your own life, use your common sense, save the \$200 an-

cuit during the bread course at a White House state dinner (yes! they have a bread course!) with Senator Cory Booker as your date.

The senator may suddenly cancel if President Obama asks him to fly to Berlin. Men *will* cancel now and then. So you must always be intersecting with new fellows at craft beer meet-ups and cooking classes. (Ha! *There* are a couple of end runs around your brain!) Also, take up golf. Good luck, Pedestal! Let me know how you're doing!

## INDELIBLE UPON ARRIVAL

DEAR E. JEAN: *This is an odd career question, so let me start off by stating I'm an artist. I've recorded, been in bands, modeled, painted, danced, and now I'm studying for a degree in graphic design. More specifically, I love my tattoos. I haven't totally gone the Travis Barker route—yet. Right now, all of mine can be covered with long sleeves and knee-length skirts. But I've created several new designs for tattoos that could be much more prominent: knuckles, chest, etc. So my query is, How do tattoos go over*

*we made a date for drinks to catch up. I've always had a crush on her. Three years ago, I asked her out, but she declined because she had a boyfriend. Last year, we scheduled drinks (as friends), and her boyfriend vetoed it at the last minute. Should I ask if he's comfortable this time? Or if he's even in the picture?*

—*Ethically Conflicted*

E.C., MY CABALLERO: There are three acceptable occasions upon which a man may be “conflicted”:

1. When suffering philosophical anguish over whether to tell a woman that she is beautiful...or that she is stunning.

2. When in the throes of moral doubt over whether to give a woman the small emerald earrings...or the large sapphire necklace.

3. When racked with spiritual uncertainty about how exactly to reveal to a woman that you own a 700-acre estate in Connecticut and a castle in Scotland.

Hesitating about her boyfriend is stupid. He's not her husband. Take her if you can, sir! ●



# ELLE

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BEAUTY



# ELLE



Cedric Buchel

*Embroidered-chiffon  
crepon dress, GUCCI,  
price on request, at  
select Gucci stores  
nationwide. For details,  
see Shopping Guide.*

# UNDER HER SKIN

CAN A MAJOR HOLLYWOOD ACTOR ALSO BE AN AUTHENTIC, INTROVERTED ARTIST? ROONEY MARA, WHO'S GETTING A LOT OF (DESERVED) ATTENTION FOR HER PERFORMANCE IN *CAROL*, IS TRYING HER DAMNEDEST TO HAVE IT BOTH WAYS. BY LAUREN WATERMAN

PHOTOGRAPHED BY CEDRIC BUCHET STYLED BY DAVID VANDEWAL

Search online, and it's easy to find footage of Rooney Mara being interviewed, in what appears to be a hotel conference room, on the morning she received her first Oscar nomination. She looks happy enough—her dimples, so rarely seen on camera, are very much in evidence—but when she's asked how she found out about the nod for her performance in 2011's *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo*, she lies, again and again. "My phone started ringing off the hook, and my mom came running up," she says, in one typical clip. "It was really exciting."

Nearly four years later, over lunch at a "Greenmarket-driven" restaurant in Chelsea (my choice; she'd suggested vegan frozen yogurt), Mara comes clean. "I knew that everyone was going to ask how I'd found out," she explains, "and I didn't really want to share that. You know how, when you have a funny story or a story that means something to you, and you tell people and they don't get it, it kind of cheapens the experience? I didn't want that to happen, so I just made something up. But then I had to answer the question, like, 50 times. Why do I have to give that to people? Why can't I keep it for myself?"

The truth, she admits, "wasn't that different," even if her mother was not, in fact, at her house. (And she still doesn't want to say who was there, although her then-newish boyfriend, writer/director Charlie McDowell, is a likely suspect.) But to Mara, that's not the point. No, the point is that she sometimes wishes she could be permitted to do her job—you know, acting—without also being pressured to surrender what feels like increasingly larger parts of her soul to the link-clicking,

comment-leaving, ticket-buying public. "As an actor, you can't just be in the film," she says. "You're also in charge of selling it, and so you have to sell yourself, and you have to be very political and make sure to not say the wrong things. It's exhausting. A lot of pressure is put on the people who were hired to make—not even to make, to be a part of making—the thing."

That she says all this in the midst of yet another interview could sound off-putting, but it's not. Instead, it seems like a genuine reflection of what's going on in Mara's head as she embarks upon a months-long promotional push for *Carol*, the first of her films since *Dragon Tattoo* to generate serious awards buzz. "I haven't done it in a while," she says, meaning publicity, "and it's not like riding a bike. You don't just get back up."

Still, she's clearly trying. We'd first met at the Rubin Museum, a sleepy five-story space dedicated primarily to Himalayan art, and she began to elucidate the origin of her interest in the region almost as soon as we paid for our tickets. (The twenty-something clerk who'd charged us had felt it necessary to first confirm that we were both adults, as opposed to students; at 30, the petite, porcelain-skinned Mara could easily be mistaken for a coed.) From there, the conversation moved rapidly to her study-abroad tour of South America, which she loved, to college in general, which she did not, even after she transferred from George Washington University to NYU—not what I'd expected from someone so often described as reserved.

Though chatty, Mara did seem nervous, which made me nervous; her volubility, in those first few moments, felt a little





*Duchesse techno  
satin dress, LANVIN,  
\$3,310, at Lanvin,  
NYC. For details, see  
Shopping Guide.*

*Right: Cotton dress, SALVATORE FERRAGAMO, \$2,290, at Salvatore Ferragamo boutiques nationwide. Calfskin sandals, CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN, \$795. Far right: Silk and viscose dress, PROENZA SCHOULER, \$3,550, at Proenza Schouler, NYC. Silver, gold, enamel, and turquoise armband, gold ring, both, BELLERON, prices on request. For details, see Shopping Guide.*







off-kilter. But when she says something later, after we've both calmed down, about learning "to give the other person what they need" in this kind of conversation, it all makes sense. Cate Blanchett, who plays Mara's titular lover in the 1950s-set *Carol*, describes her as "really available and very generous," but also notes, "She's profoundly self-contained, which I think can feel sort of daunting. She's the least needy person I've ever met."

Mara was raised in tony Bedford, New York, and is a great-granddaughter of the founder of the Pittsburgh Steelers on one side, and the founder of the New York Giants on the other; the former team is still mostly owned by a great-uncle and a cousin, while her father and his 10 siblings share a 50 percent stake in the latter. But she insists that her upbringing, while "privileged," was relatively ordinary. "People think that I grew up going to Barneys for my back-to-school clothes," she says. "I went to the Gap. We lived in a nice house on a cul-de-sac, but it wasn't a mansion. We didn't have a butler or a maid."

Growing up in a football family (or, more precisely, two) was, she says, "like growing up in any family." She's not a *huge* fan of the game: "I'm so not keyed into it," she says, although she does find it "meaningful" when the teams are doing well—particularly the Giants, for whom her father works as senior vice president of player evaluation (her mother was a real estate agent)—"because it means so much to the whole family." And she's *really* not a big fan of talking about it. In middle school, when certain classmates began to say that "there was something weird or special" about her background, "it didn't feel good," she says. "And that's carried on into my adult life. It's followed me here." When I remind her that David Fincher, her *Dragon Tattoo* director and now close friend, had called her a "trust-fund baby" in an early interview, she says, "He was being ironic. After that article came out, I was like, 'Fuck you, David. I wish I had my goddamned trust fund.'"

Mara has two brothers—one older, one younger—as well as a sister who began working as an actor in her early teens; now 32, Kate Mara is well known for her roles in *House of Cards* and in movies like *The Martian*. But Rooney, who describes herself as having been "a dark, brooding, miserable little adolescent," held back. "I didn't want to do what she was doing," she says. "We're close now, but we weren't then. And I don't think I would have been capable of it. Not acting, but handling all of the shit that comes with it. She was much more together than I was." Rooney didn't even attempt to take part in a high school play until after Kate had graduated. "I never wanted to participate, because she was my older sister, and she was really good." Of course, when Rooney finally auditioned, for *Romeo and Juliet*, she was no slouch either. "I just read a monologue and left," she recalls, "and my English teacher came running down the hall after me. He was like, 'I didn't even know you could talk! What was *that*?'"

"I don't think I probably was any good," she continues, brushing aside the fact that she was promptly cast as Juliet. But "I've always been a very sensitive person, and people tell me that if I'm in a certain mood and I go into a room, my mood will permeate the room. It's not on purpose—I'd rather be invisible in those moments—but I'm really bad at faking how I feel. Like, my emotions kind of live all over my body at all times, and there's not a good way for me to hide it." Even now that her talents have matured, she says that these sometimes-inconvenient inborn traits still play into her process. "Because I'm highly empathetic, it's easy for me to put myself in the character's shoes. It's, you know, finding the truth of the moment."

Ah, yes. The truth. This might be a good moment to note that Mara's (let's face it: very white) lie on the morning she was nominated for an Oscar appears to have been an aberration—she's actually somewhat obsessed with honesty, devoting much thought to the issue of how much of her real self she can share without, as she puts it, "getting into trouble."

"People don't really want me to be honest," she insists. "People want me—people want girls—to be grateful, gracious, poised. Not real. I watch interviews from the 1970s, of Patti Smith or John Cassavetes, and everyone's smoking, drinking, totally misbehaving, but they're being completely authentic, and I'm so jealous because that would never happen today. There's always a pre-interview, so you know what jokes you have to hit, and there's nothing genuine about it. And I hate that. I hate being a phony. I hate having to censor myself."

I'd be perfectly fine with it, I assure her, if she wanted to be 100 percent real. "But I can't," she says. "Like, not that I tweet, but if you tweet the wrong thing, you have, like, four different organizations on your ass, asking for an apology. Artists are deeply sensitive, vulnerable people, and when you are supercandid and then you get ripped apart for it, you're not going to want to do it again." So she censors herself, frequently going off the record during our conversation. These not-for-publication asides are pretty innocuous—such as her feelings about marriage. "Just because," she explains of that subject, back on the record, "until a girl reaches a certain age, that's all anyone cares about."

There's another category of questions she won't answer at all, about the kind of music she listens to, for example, or her favorite movie, or the director she'd most like to work with. "People want to know those things because they're trying to place you," she says. "It's like, 'What did she order for lunch?'" (That one I know, but I'm not telling. I feel a little bad, even, about the vegan fro-yo thing, but it is germane.) "When literally most of your life is people trying to corral you or understand you or pin you down, you get kind of protective." As Blanchett says, "She really puts paid to the idea that all actors are exhibitionists."

Of course, there is one way in which Mara expresses her taste: her much-lauded sense of style. During the rollout of *Dragon Tattoo*, she became a fashion-world darling, beloved for her sparrowy frame and her severely chic red-carpet gowns, which tended to be either black, white, or both, and frequently involved sheer panels and cutouts. Givenchy designer Riccardo Tisci, who dressed her often during that period and now regards her as a friend, says he "grew obsessed with her. I saw pictures of her, this gothic beauty, the porcelain skin, the black hair, the red lips, and thought, She is my woman. She was exactly the woman I imagined when designing clothes."

"I think it was the haircut," Mara says modestly, meaning the dark, baby-banged semimullet she'd gotten to play Lisbeth Salander. But then again, she admits, the role changed her, and the hacker-punk makeover was a big part of that. Prior to booking the part, she'd dressed, like many young women, to please others—in old pictures of her, there's a preponderance of frills. "When you're starting out as an actress, you have to go to auditions, and you have to have all these outfits, like 'the slutty girl.' Even in my family, I'd have to dress a certain way for my grandparents." But that option "went out the window" while she was shooting the film. "There was no more trying, and I felt really unapologetic and comfortable. In a lot of ways, I felt more like myself than I ever had." (Truly: Asked whether Sony's failure to green-light the *Dragon Tattoo* sequel—once seen as a sure thing—had a silver lining, in that it allowed her to leave

CONTINUED ON PAGE 134





*Beauty Secret: A deep crimson lip adds a quick, sophisticated flourish. Try NARS Pure Matte Lipstick in Terre de Feu.*

*Silk top, price on request, dress, \$2,500, both, GIVENCHY BY RICCARDO TISCI, visit [givenchy.com](http://givenchy.com). Smoky quartz cuff, BELPERRON, price on request. For details, see Shopping Guide.*

*Hair by Ward at the Wall Group for Living Proof; makeup by Kate Lee at Starworks Artists for Chanel Beauté; manieure by Geraldine Holford at the Wall Group for Dior Vernis; set design by Colin Donahue for Osel and the Elephant; production by County Fair Productions; fashion assistants: Daniel Gaines, Salima Brete-Jobarteh, and Tas Tobey*

# SHE'S COME

CUT MINIMALISM SOME SLACK.  
PAIRED WITH PEEKABOO UNDERPINNINGS,  
SHARPLY TAILORED MONOCHROMATIC  
SEPARATES BRING THE HEAT

PHOTOGRAPHED BY LIZ COLLINS  
STYLED BY SAMIRA NASR

# UNDO







Sequin-embellished coat, price on request, silk camisole, \$1,150, both, CALVIN KLEIN COLLECTION, at Calvin Klein Collection, NYC. Rose gold and diamond hoop earring, ANITA KO, price on request. Leather and pearl necklace, MIZUKI, \$585. Nylon and elastane tights, WOLFORD, \$67. Calfskin loafers, BALLY, \$695. For details, see Shopping Guide.

NE



*Right: Cotton top, \$590, leather skirt, \$2,800, pearl earring, price on request, all, SALVATORE FERRAGAMO, at Salvatore Ferragamo, NYC. Nylon and elastane tights, WOLFORD, \$67. Far right: Cotton vest, \$710, leather pants, \$3,215, sequin leggings, \$440, all, ISABEL MARANT, at Isabel Marant, L.A. Rose gold and diamond hoop earring, ANITA KO, price on request. Leather and pearl necklace, MIZUKI, \$585. Suede pumps, MALONE SOULIERS, \$797. For details, see Shopping Guide.*





*Mink coat, FENDI, price on request, visit [fendi.com](http://fendi.com).  
Nylon and elastane tights, WOLFORD, \$67. Calfskin mules, HERMÈS, \$780.*







*Sequin and toile blazer, sequin and satin trousers, crystal-detail belt, all, LANVIN, prices on request, at Lanvin, NYC. Nylon and elastane tights, WOLFORD, \$67. Suede pumps, MALONE SOULIERS, \$797. For details, see Shopping Guide.*

Right: Bonded-wool gabardine jacket, \$2,695, cotton poplin shirt, \$595, both, MICHAEL KORS COLLECTION, at select Michael Kors stores nationwide. Belt, TRASH AND VAUDEVILLE, price on request. Nylon and elastane tights, WOLFORD, \$67. Suede pumps, MALONE SOULIERS, \$797. Far right: Acetate and viscose jumpsuit, BOSS, price on request, visit [hugoboss.com](http://hugoboss.com). Leather and pearl necklace, MIZUKI, \$585. For details, see Shopping Guide.





*Beauty Secret:  
Emphasize ultratender  
skin by contrasting it  
with a matte red lip.  
Try Chanel Rouge  
Allure Velvet Lip Colour  
in La Malicieuse.*





*Right: Cotton linen blazer, \$1,190, trousers, \$495, both, MAX MARA, collection at Bergdorf Goodman, NYC. Sequin leggings, ISABEL MARANT, \$440. Pearl earring, SALVATORE FERRAGAMO, price on request. Far right: Silk jacket, trousers, both, HAIDER ACKERMANN, prices on request, visit [haiderackermann.com](http://haiderackermann.com). Nylon and elastane tights, WOLFORD, \$67. Calfskin loafers, BALLY, \$695. For details, see Shopping Guide.*





Right: Tassel top, \$2,350, skirt, \$1,950, mirror earring, \$380 (for pair), all, LOEWE, collection at Dover Street Market, NYC. Far right: Knit top, embellished-leather skirt, belt, all, TOD'S, prices on request, at Tod's boutiques nationwide. Gold, pearl, and diamond hoop earring, DELFINA DELETTREZ, price on request. Calfskin mules, HERMÈS, \$780. Stylist's own socks. For details, see Shopping Guide.







Right: Double-face cashmere, cotton, and silk jacket, price on request, pants, \$2,500, jersey swimsuit, \$550, all, HERMÈS, at Hermès stores nationwide. Leather and pearl necklace, MIZUKI, \$585. Far right: Leather coat, MIU MIU, price on request, at select Miu Miu boutiques nationwide. Gold, pearl, and diamond hoop earring, DELFINA DELETTREZ, price on request. Nylon and elastane tights, WOLFORD, \$67. Calfskin loafers, BALLY, \$695. For details, see Shopping Guide.



Hair by Kevin Ryan for Unite; makeup by Maki Ryoke at Tim Howard Management; manicure by Maki Sakamoto at Kate Ryan Inc. for Chanel Le Vernis; casting by Zan Ludlum at Zan Casting; model: Laura Schellenberg at New York Models; choreography by Brendan Drake; fashion assistant: Yashua Simmons





# TOI TOI TOUR DE

COUTURE DETAILING HITS THE STREETS ON TWO WHEELS FOR A THOROUGHLY  
MODERN, TEXTURE-RICH TAKE ON POLISHED PARISIAN DRESSING

PHOTOGRAPHED BY DAVID BURTON STYLED BY BARBARA BAUMEL

# FRANCE FRANCE FRANCE FRANCE








Cotton jersey dress, price on request, pants, \$1,000, crystal-embellished jacquard hat, \$725, tweed, calfskin, and metal handbag, \$3,000, tweed sandals, \$2,400, bicycle, price on request, all, CHANEL, call 800-550-0005. Black gold, tanzanite, and emerald earrings, GARNAZELLE, price on request. Gold and aquamarine ring, MARCO BICEGO, \$4,210. Her own nose ring. Stylist's own rings. For details, see Shopping Guide.





Sequin-embroidered wool sweater, \$1,600, embroidered-lace skirt, price on request, embellished printed canvas sneakers, \$395, all, MARC JACOBS, visit [marcjacobs.com](http://marcjacobs.com). Sunglasses, KAREN WALKER, \$300. Gold, silver, and buffalo horn earrings, JOHN HARDY, \$895. Brass and wood bangle, CHLOÉ, \$640. Metal, resin, and glass ring, \$580, metal, velvet, and turquoise ring, \$390, both, GUCCI. Snakeskin and mink handbag, FENDI, price on request.





*Chiffon top, \$1,990, skirt, \$1,850, both, FENDI, at Fendi, NYC. Stretch Lyera headpiece, CHERRY CHAU, \$65. Sunglasses, MARC JACOBS, \$395. Gold and enamel necklace, ALISON LOU, \$2,905. Calfskin handbag, COACH, \$695. Nylon and elastane tights, GASPARD YURKIEVICH BY GERBE, price on request. Pearl-detail leather moccasins, GUCCI, \$1,100. For details, see Shopping Guide.*









*Far left: Cotton-blend top, \$760, cupro pants, \$1,505, printed scarf, \$420, socks, price on request, all, SACAI, visit [sacai.jp](http://sacai.jp). Sunglasses, COACH, \$195. Metal, crystal, and glass pearl earring, GUCCI, \$450 (for pair). Brass and wood bangle, CHLOÉ, \$640. Pewter-embroidered leather bracelets, both, MARIA RUDMAN FOR L'ECLAIREUR, \$195 each. Leather bracelet, ENDLESS JEWELRY, \$60. Brass and onyx ring, ZADIG & VOLTAIRE, \$160. Embroidered-silk flats, ETRO, \$1,115. Silk fringe scarves (on bicycle), ROCKINS LONDON, \$252 each.*

*Left: Embroidered silk crepe dress, strass necklace (worn on head), leather hand straps, calfskin loafers, all, LOUIS VUITTON, prices on request, at select Louis Vuitton stores nationwide. Silk scarf, ROCKINS LONDON, \$200. For details, see Shopping Guide.*





*Silk and lace dress, price on request, cotton bra top, \$440, printed pants, \$1,280, all, ETRO, collection at Saks Fifth Avenue stores nationwide. Sunglasses, WILDFOX SUN, \$189. Gold-plated brass earrings, AURÉLIE BIDERMAN, \$555. Silk scarf, ROCKINS LONDON, \$200. Rope, wood, and brass necklace, CHLOÉ, \$690. Leather belt, DRIES VAN NOTEN, price on request. Calfskin handbag, COACH, \$695. Embellished printed canvas sneakers, MARC JACOBS, \$395. Carbon fiber bicycle, HERMÈS, price on request.*





*Silk shirt, cotton vest, pants,  
leather belt, silk gloves,  
handbag, socks, all, DRIES VAN  
NOTEN, prices on request, visit  
[driesvannoten.com](http://driesvannoten.com). Woven-mesh  
and crystal barrettes, all, COLETTE  
MALOUF, \$88 each. Sunglasses,  
PLAYBOY, \$295. Pearl-detail leather  
moccasins, GUCCI, \$1,100. Leather  
handbag, SOPHIE HULME, \$3,895.  
Stylist's own necklace. For details,  
see Shopping Guide.*



Brocade blazer, \$3,295, vest,  
\$1,395, pants, \$1,395, all, DOLCE  
& GABBANA, at select Dolce &  
Gabbana boutiques nationwide.  
Sunglasses, WILDFOX SUN, \$189.  
White gold, pink sapphire, pink  
opal, and gray diamond earring,  
GARNAZELLE, \$3,532 (for pair).  
Chiffon flower brooch, LANVIN,  
\$290. Lambskin gloves, CAUSSE,  
\$329. White quartz ring, STEPHANIE  
KANTIS, \$475. Jasper, pavé  
sapphire, and silver ring, PAMELA  
LOVE, \$1,265. Stylist's own scarf.







*Silk chiffon blouse, \$450, leather skirt, \$695, both, COACH, at select Coach stores nationwide. Silk scarf, ZADIG & VOLTAIRE, price on request. Silk crepe scarf, ECHO, \$45. Beaded necklace, MAZORCAS, price on request. Gold-plated brass and wooden necklace, AURÉLIE BIDERMAN, \$1,130. Suede and leather handbag, CHLOÉ, \$1,290. Carbon fiber bicycle, HERMÈS, price on request. Stylist's own headband. For details, see Shopping Guide.*



Silk blouse, \$950, silk-embroidered lace skirt, \$3,675, both, ROCHAS, visit rochas.com. Cotton hat, HERSCHEL SUPPLY, \$40. Black gold, tanzanite, and emerald earrings, GARNAZELLE, price on request. Embroidered handbag, \$3,800, pearl-detail leather moccasins, \$1,100, all, GUCCI. Stylist's own necklace. Her own nose ring.

Beauty Secret: A kohl-rimmed eye against an otherwise neutral face is always effortlessly cool. Try Lancôme Le Crayon Khôl in Black Ebony.







Embroidered hand-painted leather jacket, skirt, glasses, prices on request; silk blouse, \$1,890; straw beret, \$340; metal, resin, and glass ring, \$580; pearl-detail leather moccasins, \$1,100; all, GUCCI, visit [gucci.com](http://gucci.com). Gold-plated brass earrings, AURÉLIE BIDERMAN, \$540. Topaz ring, \$475, moss agate ring, \$285, both, STEPHANIE KANTIS. Socks, SACAI, price on request. For details, see Shopping Guide.

Hair by Hélène Bidard at ArtList; makeup by William Bartel at ArtList; manicure by Béatrice Eni; prop styling by Fabienne Eisenstein at Lalaland Artists; casting by Sisi Choneo at Zan Casting; produced by White Dot productions; model: Charlene Hogger at Elite Paris; fashion assistant: Claire Le Doeuf



*Right: Beaded net top,  
THE ROW, price on request,  
at The Row, L.A. Paillette  
earrings, PRADA, price  
on request.*

*Far right: Sequin-  
embellished cotton dress,  
MARC JACOBS, price on  
request, visit [marcjacobs.com](http://marcjacobs.com). For details,  
see Shopping Guide.*







# THE PEN AND THE SWORD

WHEN SHE'S  
NOT LAYING WASTE  
TO ZOMBIES ON  
*THE WALKING DEAD*,  
DANAI GURIRA IS  
CRAFTING HEART-  
POUNDING, CRITICALLY  
ACCLAIMED PLAYS—  
NOW ARRIVING  
ON BROADWAY

PHOTOGRAPHED  
BY PATRIC SHAW  
STYLED BY  
YASHUA SIMMONS

"SURVIVAL ISN'T LYING DOWN  
AND SAYING, OH, POOR ME.  
IT'S FINDING WAYS TO LIVE AND  
KEEP YOUR LIGHT SHINING  
IN THE MIDST OF THE  
DARKEST CIRCUMSTANCES."

Believe it or not, Danai Gurira sees a strong correlation between her fictional role as Michonne—the samurai-sword-wielding, zombie-dispatching fan favorite she's played for four seasons of AMC's megahit *The Walking Dead*—and her other life, some would say her "real" one, as an award-winning playwright. On the show, "I work with writers whom I believe to be true storytellers," says the 37-year-old. "And because I'm a writer, I pay very keen attention to their vision. I find that so fueling creatively, because in telling those stories, you use everything you've got. You come away with battle scars. It's gratifying and invigorating."

Proof that she's fighting a winning battle: Following a critically acclaimed run at New York City's Public Theater this fall, *Eclipsed*, the two-act play Gurira wrote in 2008 about a group of captive women in the second Liberian Civil War, will light up Broadway's Golden Theater next month. Called a "detailed and painfully moving exploration of the brutality and dehumanization that seem to be endemic to African conflicts" by Charles Isherwood of the *New York Times*, the play also packs considerable star power. One of its four leads (all female, all black) is Oscar winner Lupita Nyong'o, a close friend of Gurira's who, even before debuting in the play at the Public, has championed the script since she understudied in a 2009 staging at Yale Repertory Theatre as an undergrad.

Gurira built her acting career in a series of character parts in respected indie films, including that of a fragile Senegalese jewelry maker in Tom McCarthy's heartwarming *The Visitor* in 2007. Then came a recurring role as Jill, a journalist on HBO's *Treme*. But *The Walking Dead*—one of cable's highest-rated shows for five seasons running—was the game changer, catapulting Gurira into the kind of television star who inspires fan pages, hashtags, Halloween costumes, and all manner of Comic-Con adoration.

Throughout the unstoppable popularity of *The Walking Dead*, she's continued to craft stage works of a wildly different nature, most of them about African women at the center of conflict. Indeed, she's said that she constructed Michonne—who displays fierce fortitude in the face of, well, the apocalypse—in part from her playwriting research, in which she interviewed women who survived the Liberian Civil War. "I'm a child of academics," Gurira says, explaining her process of diving deep into each character before she starts to write.

Born in Iowa to a university librarian mother and a chemistry professor father, Gurira moved with her family to their native Zimbabwe when she was five, where her parents continued teaching. She returned to the U.S. for college in 1997, earning a degree in psychology from Minnesota's Macalester College in 2001, then an MFA in acting from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts three years later. Gurira thanks her upbringing for more than just her knack for rigorous research. "It's also part of why I create," she says. "It's my artistic mandate to commit myself to telling stories that are usually glossed over, especially those of African women."

Gurira's first play, 2005's off-Broadway hit *In the Continuum*, about two black women navigating the African AIDS crisis, won an Obie (Special Citation), an Outer Critics Circle (John Gassner honor for playwriting), and a Helen Hayes (Outstanding Lead Actress, Gurira) award. In 2012, *The Convert*, another off-Broadway drama, this time about a young woman in a southern African city forced to marry an older man, won six Ovation Awards (among them Direction, Lead Actress, and Featured Actress) and a Los Angeles Outer Critics Circle award. Her latest, *Familiar*, which has its New York premiere at Playwrights Horizons next month, depicts a wealthy emigrant family from Zimbabwe as they prepare for their eldest daughter's wedding to her white fiancé, a human-rights activist.

For its part, *Eclipsed*—which has already won NAACP, Helen Hayes, and Connecticut Critics Circle awards—is an intense, moving, and often deftly witty recounting of four African women forced into sexual servitude to their shared husband, a rebel commander in war-torn, early-2000s Liberia (Nyong'o's "The Girl" being his newest and youngest acquisition). The C.O., though, is never seen. His presence is entirely offstage, which centralizes the drama around the women as they not only fight for survival, but also jockey for favorable position with their captor, as well as for the respect and appreciation of one another. It's a canny choice that spotlights the conflicting choices women are forced to make when victimized and oppressed.

"I want to see women of African descent shine," Gurira says. "I want to see them [in roles] that are intense, that are full, that are complex—that allow them to exercise their chops. I want women of color who are preparing for auditions to stop asking, 'Where are the monologues? Where are my stories?'" —*Seth Plattner*





*Sequin-embroidered tunic, GIORGIO ARMANI, price on request, at Giorgio Armani, NYC. White gold and black pavé diamond ring, DAVID YURMAN, price on request. For details, see Shopping Guide.*

*Hair by Vernon Scott; makeup by Christian McCulloch for Dolce & Gabbana Beauty; manicure by Maki Sakamoto at Kate Ryan Inc. for Chanel Le Vernis; fashion assistant: Stephanie Sanchez*

slightly from a high school summer as a foreign-exchange student and a college summer spent researching my thesis. I checked into an affordable hotel where I'd previously stayed. And I bet you can guess what I did next: I called another man, one I'd dated briefly the previous fall.

When I began this essay, I oscillated between feeling an almost celebratory pride—in my youthful independence, in the blithe, confident way I owned my desires and my sexuality—and a perhaps antiquated fear that reading about a woman's sexual escapades might be unpalatable to some. As Kathryn Schulz wrote in a *New York* magazine profile of *Wild* author Cheryl Strayed, who spent a summer hiking 1,100 miles on the Pacific Crest Trail: "In a culture with profoundly ambivalent feelings about independent women, it is not always clear what kind of adventures we will be lauded for undertaking, nor what kind of tales we will be lauded for telling." Indeed, I also found myself struggling with the not unrelated formal challenge this subject matter presented. How to prevent it from reading like a desultory string of episodic affairs, devoid of plot or theme? How to write about a libidinous, wayward, searching character who behaves, some would say, like a bit of a scoundrel, but who also happens to be a woman?

If I were to write this story as a book, it would be a picaresque novel: a first-person account of "the adventures of a rogue held together only by the personality of its hero," to quote the late Orville Prescott, erstwhile book critic for the *New York Times*, in his review of Saul Bellow's *The Adventures of Augie March*. In a picaresque tale—*Augie March*, Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones*, Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, even Hunter S. Thompson's *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, among many others—the protagonist tends to be an outsider of modest origins, a trickster, a social climber. He rambles around having adventures, some romantic, and getting into comedic scrapes. He has "no more morals than a tomcat," to quote Prescott again, and is eternally unrepentant.

Like these male antiheroes, I was a drifter of sorts during that strange, liminal summer after graduating from college: alone, deracinated, restless, without immediate goals or obligations, indifferent to consequences. "I think a lot of women live like this now, from adventure to adventure," my husband's ex-mother-in-law, a wild-child 1970s actress, told me when I ran into her and mentioned the essay I was writing. "I know I did," she said, laughing, "and I don't regret a minute of it."

And yet historically, there haven't been many female picaresque narratives. There's Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders*, a novel that purports to be the true account of a female criminal who thieves, prostitutes herself, and marries five times in her wily quest to avoid poverty. Fast-forward 250 years, and there's Erica Jong's 1973 *Fear of Flying*, the sexually candid story of a poet who, while on a business trip with her husband, meets another man and jaunts around Europe with him. There are a few other examples of female picaresques I could name, but the point is, it's as masculine a genre as there is. Which is not surprising: Only in the past few decades have women had the luxury of wandering alone through the world.

Of course, in the 1960s and '70s, feminists began challenging societal constraints, opening up new professional and personal possibilities for women. Now, in 2016, we're living in a different universe, one in which *Eat, Pray, Love*, Elizabeth Gilbert's memoir of traveling alone to Italy, India, and Indonesia, sells over 9 million copies and becomes a 2010 rom-com starring Julia Roberts. The

massive recent success of both that book and *Wild* would seem to indicate that such stories reflect the truth of women's lives. Or maybe they speak to an appetite for no-strings adventure—the desire to experience it voyeuristically, if not in reality.

Because even today, most women cannot take the kind of trips Gilbert and Strayed did. Most of us are bound by the usual exigencies of life, particularly after a certain age. Plus, as old-fashioned as it sounds, it's still more acceptable for a man to roam around alone than it is for a woman. This may be why both writers' adventures are incited by domestic upheaval: divorce and a failed rebound romance in Gilbert's case, divorce and the death of her mother in Strayed's. As Schulz puts it, "It is as if only the total destruction of the domestic sphere could justify a woman's presence on such adventures."

I decided to travel on my own because, as I told a friend the weekend we graduated, we were the freest we'd ever been and likely would ever be again. Looking back, my motivations are more obvious to me now than they were then. I was—what? Reveling in my freedom. Following my intuition and urges. Having sex. Having fun. Living like the men I'd read about in books.

The guy I called was a Wall Street executive I'd met during an internship the previous summer at an investment bank in New York City. I'd asked him to lunch as the relationship with my ex had begun to unravel. We spent a few lighthearted weekends together that fall before I became too engrossed in writing my thesis to see him.

He was eight years my senior, successful, witty. But he was also the son of a wealthy Southern family—he had a thick, caramelly drawl—and I glimpsed strains of traditionalism and conservatism poking up like weeds from beneath his affable, modern-dude demeanor. He bought me a navy-blue cashmere sweater at an upscale boutique because my own sweaters were pilling and chintzy. He corrected my table manners and my slouchy posture. At restaurants, he'd fussily unfold his napkin, placing it neatly on his lap, then arrange his silverware in military-straight lines. I used to neglect mine to antagonize him, waiting to see how long it would take him to say something. But I viewed these as minor quirks. He was charming. He made me laugh. I liked fucking him. You could say I made an international booty call.

Crazily enough, he flew from New York to Paris the next day. He booked us a room at a luxury hotel called the Hotel Square, which I remember as a monolithic gray stone building that loomed portentously on a street corner. "*Le bâtiment gris, là*," I told the cabdriver as we pulled up, feeling sophisticated and a little louche to be giving him directions to the scene of my impending assignation. Inside, the decor was modern and subdued: gray curtains and gray bed linens on low-lying platform beds, black wooden furniture. There seemed to be bowls of macarons on every surface.

I waited in the room for him. Sprawled diagonally across the neatly made bed, I flipped through a French tabloid and ate pink and green macarons. Upon arriving, he gave me a quick, chaste kiss—"What're you eating, bonbons?" he said—set down his bag, and then proceeded to remove all his clothes and head for the shower. Afterward, he walked around the room naked, toweling his wet hair and retrieving things from his suitcase while his flaccid penis flopped around like a water balloon. Now, I was obviously not a prude, but his stripping startled me. Months had passed since we'd seen each other,

let alone slept together. I hadn't realized it until that moment, but I'd expected him to sweep in and seduce me anew, to woo me with dinner, or at least a bottle of wine, before he undressed in front of me in the stark light of late morning. Or maybe I would've done the seducing, had he waited more than five minutes to denude himself. It was as though he viewed me as a quotidian piece of his life's furniture, like we were an old married couple of 60-odd years.

Or at least those were the thoughts that crossed my mind at the time. Who can fathom the fragile unpredictability of desire? Whatever the reason, I did not want to sleep with him. Not then. Not later. Not ever again in my life. I could only view him with a clinical detachment, instead of with the soft, idealizing light of amorous possibility. He'd return the favor, though, after he pressed himself against me in the bed that night, and I scooted to the opposite side, then avoided his overtures for the next 48 hours. Frustrated, he announced that I could stay in the Hotel Square for the rest of the week—he'd pay for it—but that he was leaving. "I hope you never do this to another man," he said, and I wish I could say I felt sorry for him.

With a 22-year-old's flair for theatrics, I ran after him through the tasteful lobby of the Hotel Square, down the street, and to a rental-car place where he paid for a tiny, pewter-colored Peugeot. "Where are you going?" I demanded. He wouldn't tell me. So I opened the car door and staged a sit-in in the passenger seat. "I'm coming with you," I told him. Seventeen years later, as someone who craves solitude, it's funny and perplexing to me that I didn't want to be left alone in an expensive hotel in Paris. Surely it was a mix of pride, boredom, a refusal to be rejected, and the terrifying vastness of my newfound freedom that made me insist on accompanying him.

We spent the next five days driving through the Loire Valley, touring the castles with a relentless intensity—Chenonceau, Chambord, Chinon, Amboise—and in total silence. He wouldn't speak to me, so after a while I gave up, replacing the sex we weren't having with chocolate mousse and multiple glasses of wine at meals.

This bizarre castle tour eventually built up the necessary erotic tension between us. One afternoon, I hammily sidled up to him as we looked at a faded old tapestry in a drafty castle; he burst out laughing. Suffice it to say, we made up. We drove back to Paris, where we said an amicable early-morning good-bye, and I checked myself into another cheap hotel.

In the end, this isn't a story of redemption, capped by a life-altering epiphany. It's not a fairy tale that culminates in my falling in love. The point is the adventure, just as it was the point of the trip itself. Because let's face it, when I realized I wasn't into the guy from Texas, I could have called one of my sisters, or a girlfriend. But I didn't. And anyone who's ever traveled with someone they're attracted to will understand why. It's thrilling to stand next to that person and take in art and architecture and the grand monuments of history while an electrical current passes between you, and you can't wait to get back to your hotel. A sense of discovery, companionship, sex (and the frisson leading up to it), the utter lack of long-term plans: This is what solo travel is about. Sure, it can be about solitude, but it's also about opening yourself to new people and experiences. When you travel alone, you might call someone up and say, "Come see me." And when someone says, "Come to Italy," you might get on a train and go. ●



other playwrights, remembers hearing gunfire one afternoon. "We were told that it was merely a wedding and that the guns were being fired to celebrate. The other playwrights voted to stay where we were, just to be on the safe side. But Kia jumped up and said, 'Let's go see the wedding!' It was at that moment I thought, She is as courageous as her writing. From this person I can truly learn."

"For other playwrights, she's a major figure," London says. "What she's lacked is a breakthrough, her *Angels in America*." Interestingly, he thinks that might be *The Castle Cross the Magnet Carter*.

A longtime influence on Corthron's work has been the Brazilian-born radical theater director, writer, and politician Augusto Boal, who wrote the landmark 1974 book *Theatre of the Oppressed*. Boal believed that Western theater, going back to Aristotle, was too passive, and wanted to make audiences collaborators in the process and problem-solving of the play. He argued for a new kind of drama. "Boal believed," Corthron says, her hands flying, "that in order to institute political change, an audience has to be left with a sense of hope that there is a way out of a bleak situation."

A more recent influence for Corthron is the work of nineteenth-century novelist Charlotte Brontë, whose preserved family home, the Parsonage at Haworth, the playwright visited during a stay in the north of England. "What I learned from reading *Jane Eyre* is to trust the reader," she says. "You don't have to give them all the information. Brontë knew the reader would get it because they would feel it."

It is not lost on Corthron that Brontë and her siblings wrote their immortal works in an age and an environment that tried and tested them. Ruled by a harsh father, they had scant opportunity for identity outside of their family. In spite of their isolation, their imaginations flourished.

Thinking about this, Corthron herself looks back on how it felt to be a black child living in a white town through the 1960s and '70s, like a marginalized character from one of her own future works. But she sees herself differently now. "Times change. Now I talk about race. I have white close friends now. I trust them," she says. "What used to happen doesn't seem to happen anymore." She delivers another handclap. Finally, we're talking about what Kia Corthron wants to talk about. ●

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TRAIL OF TERROR  
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 91

put me on a fear-seeking hamster wheel and left my radar for what constituted reasonable risk fairly skewed.

Perhaps the most important way I hadn't prepared for my trip was that I never bothered to research how many miles I could easily walk in a day. I figured about 18. (A better guess would have been eight.) I also hadn't reserved any campsites, an oversight I deeply regretted when I arrived at the National Park visitor's station and a ranger informed me that most of its sites were spoken for along the 35-mile route I'd selected. This meant I'd have to spend my first night in the National Forest, where people can camp anywhere they like—and where there was a good chance no one would be near enough to hear me if I screamed. The ranger gave me the food canister required for backpackers, explaining that I should put anything remotely edible in it, since bears are adept at picking up the subtlest scents. So not just beef jerky and gorp went in the canister, but sunscreen and even, if it had ever been

tainted by an Emergen-C, my water bottle. Finally she cued up a video that covered all the Tetons' summer dangers—lightning storms, snow-covered passes, but mostly bears. "That thing sure makes you freaked out about bears," I said to her when it was done. "That's the point," she responded.

That first day, I imagined bears watching me, stalking me, sniffing me downwind from miles away. Since they're most likely to be aggressive if you catch them unawares, I sang the national anthem and "She'll Be Comin' Round the Mountain" over and over. I also walked as fast as I could. I'd gotten a late start and then realized I'd wildly exaggerated how much ground I could cover; even if I hurried, I'd still be hiking at dusk, when bears are more likely to be out, and maybe past dark, when bears would not only be most difficult to spot but also when they've attacked people sleeping in their tents—it's unusual, but still.

I passed by one cluster of park campsites and then, as night fell, came to a lake so perfectly still and reflective it seemed weightless. Around it were four sites, and the sight of other people—an older hippie couple doing naked yoga, the woman's bare, white ass flashing like a beacon as she raced to pull up her pants—was so heartening, I stopped to rest. After a few moments, the thought of leaving my fellow humans, naked or not, felt unbearable, so I decided to set up my tent at an as-yet-unoccupied site. And just as I did, the woman who'd reserved it showed up and said, in a taut, pissed-off voice, "I just don't understand what you're doing here."

I apologized and began taking down my tent. While I did, she launched into a series of stories about bear attacks. She told me about the librarian a grizzly had left half-eaten in Yellowstone and the guy mauled to death by a black bear in Alaska. "I made the mistake of reading the forensics report on him," she said. "You want to know the worst part? The bear ate his testicles." I put on my pack to go. It felt like being banished into the wilderness, where I'd likely die. At which point she mentioned, almost begrudgingly, that actually she was nervous about being alone, so company might be nice.

For the rest of the night, still worried she might boot me, I treated her like a fickle royal patron. I agreed with everything she said. I waited until she suggested we go to sleep to crawl into my tent. And once I did, I lay there letting my body go limp with relief, feeling as if I'd been plucked from a shark tank and deposited outside of the glass—just as close to what could devour me but now invulnerable.

The next morning, though, heading out, I was again consumed by dread. During a particularly uncertain period in my twenties, I'd sometimes been flooded with anxiety so potent my mind felt like an antihill, a space of frantic motion where all thoughts invited horrifying outcomes. This felt like that. What if I fell down and got injured? What if, while injured, I tried to eat and then later, not able to travel even 10 yards to deposit my canister for the night, I was attacked by a bear?

I charged through Death Canyon Shelf, a narrow plateau strewn with boulders. The 13,770-foot peak of the Grand Teton, the highest mountain in the park, rose ahead of me menacingly, the snow-covered top appearing sporadically through the clouds.

I scurried over Mount Meek Divide and down into the bowl-shaped Alaska Basin, dotted with lakes, and caught a glimpse, far off, of another female hiker, her backpack bobbing toward me. As we passed we spoke briefly—about bears (of the dozen people I encountered, not a single one didn't mention bears). The trail switchbacked around a

tiny turquoise lake and down through a deep canyon etched by a frigid river of white-water rapids, waterfalls, and the occasional crystal-clear eddy. That was where I stayed that night, close enough that I could hear the rushing.

I hardly ate. I barely slept. The next day, for noise, I began narrating what I thought might be happening at that very moment in my office, not because I so loved being there but because I remembered it as a place where I'd never felt like my life was imperiled, which by then seemed like an unfathomable luxury. The trail dropped precipitously through a canyon, then began climbing, and soon the terrain became almost psychedelically beautiful—fields of faded sagebrush, huge rocks covered in multicolored lichen, outcroppings of trees with gnarled, smoothed roots. I noticed all this, however, only in quick glances sneaked between scanning for danger. Gradually, I rose above the tree line and made the arduous climb to Paintbrush Divide. At the top, I turned on my phone—it didn't get reception, but I wanted to take a video of the panorama. When I watched it later, I got dizzy; I'd whirled around like a dervish in my determination to keep moving.

Heading down from Paintbrush, I discovered I'd messed up my knees with my speed-walking. Within half a mile, with thousands of feet still to decline, they hurt so much I felt nauseated. I worried that they'd give out—until, that is, I had to traverse a section of the path covered in icy snow. With every tentative step, I imagined slipping, hurtling down the steep slope under the weight of my heavy pack. It was like fear had burned into the circuitry of my brain, and I couldn't respond to anything without panic.

But I made it through another night. I made it to the bottom of the mountain the next day, despite my knees. And finally, four days after I started, I was walking around Jenny Lake, past people in normal, everyday clothes, out for one-mile walks to take in the scenery before heading back to their cars. Suddenly, the fear evaporated, leaving room for so many other things—joy, exhaustion, hunger, relief. I felt almost dazed. I hitched a ride back to my hostel, and by the time I was sitting in the passenger seat of a truck—speeding past the Tetons, which loomed over us mile after mile—it occurred to me that I wasn't interested in chasing fear anymore.

Partly, it was that spending these four days and three nights so utterly petrified made doing anything that might intentionally, unnecessarily jeopardize my existence seem silly, indulgently self-abnegating. But the trip also prompted me to recognize what had already begun to change. I'd been working on digging myself out of the hole I'd once been determined to dig into, through therapy and medication, briefly, but also by learning to coexist with ugly emotions that I'd once thought might swallow me whole. As that happened, fear had begun to lose its allure. Things have continued to shift in my life since then, and mostly for the better, but this, too, has been gradual, the result of a general muddling through of options. It wasn't, in other words, that leaving everything behind and setting out on a journey allowed me to come back and face my life in a completely different way, like in those books. My evolution happened in the normal-life way, like a river, not a flood.

Last summer, I finally got my aforementioned boyfriend, Matt, who by then was my husband, to come with me to the Tetons, and we ended up taking the hike I'd done alone. Passing through the same places was strange, like revisiting a nightmare that had been leached of its power. It was midsummer, so both warmer and wetter than my solo trip, and the

meadows were blanketed with wildflowers. At the top of Hurricane Pass, instead of racing through, we stopped, and Matt climbed up to a patch of grainy snow to see if he could use his sleeping pad as a sled (he couldn't, but it was funny to watch him try). Lying in our tent as the sky blackened, we'd listen as birds erupted into a cacophony of calls, then quieted.

When it was over, I was tired and happy, not relieved. It seemed anticlimactic. In the last few years, when I've been intimidated, I've remembered the hike I took alone, and whatever I've been facing has seemed more manageable. Camping with Matt, I knew, would never serve that purpose. There were no wild spikes of fear. We had fun. I wished it could have lasted longer. And there is value, I see now, in trying to let that be enough. ●

#### UNDER HER SKIN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 100

Lisbeth's distinctive look behind, she says no. "I miss that haircut," she insists, adding that she'd happily film a follow-up anytime, if she's not already "too old.")

Even still, she's long since dyed her hair back to its natural medium brown, and she promises that her everyday wardrobe is nowhere near as carefully considered as the clothes she chooses for premieres and other events. "I love looking at fashion—it's a form of art, completely. And I'm very interested in aesthetics. But in my life, in L.A., I'm usually in workout clothes or pajamas, because I hate getting dressed in the morning."

*Carol*, now in theaters, is based on a 1952 romance novel called *The Price of Salt*, by Patricia Highsmith; Mara plays Therese, a mousy, slightly odd shopgirl who falls in love with Blanchett's married sophisticate. She's wonderfully cast, as the film's director, Todd Haynes, points out. "Oh my God, I made such the perfect choice, if I do say so myself," he gloats as soon as he picks up the telephone. Indeed: A different director who was previously attached to the project had also approached Mara about the role, she says, but she'd just finished shooting four movies in a row—2013's *Her* (as the lovelorn lead's ex-wife); *Side Effects* (as a spoiler alert—dangerous wife masquerading as a sleepwalking depressive); and the Terrence Malick-esque small-town crime drama *Ain't Them Bodies Saints*—as well as an as-yet-unreleased project written and directed by the actual Terrence Malick. So she said no. "Which is crazy to me now," she says, "because who would ever pass up the chance to work with Cate? I must have really hated myself during that time."

Well, she was tired, certainly. "Exhausted," she confirms. She'd moved to L.A. and started working shortly after college graduation, appearing as a high school basketball player in 2009's *The Winning Season* and starring in a 2010 remake of *A Nightmare on Elm Street*. But it was her much-smaller part in that year's *The Social Network* that really set her career in motion: Although the (apocryphal) college girl who dumped Mark Zuckerberg and prompted him to create Facebook has almost nothing in common with *Dragon Tattoo*'s asocial rebel, Fincher—who directed both movies—nevertheless thought of Mara when he was seeking a female lead for the 2011 film. Her subsequent performance, which was simultaneously spiky, tough, and achingly vulnerable, combined with the aforementioned physical transformation, rightly made her a star, but the ensuing whirlwind wore her out. Most young actors in their first flush of fame would be too scared of losing everything to walk away from a hot streak, but that's exactly what Mara decided to do, taking a year off to travel, mostly, but also to spend a summer living in a rental in Brooklyn. As she sees it, there was no other option. "I just didn't have anything left to give."

Her reentry has been a bit rocky. *Trash*, a favela-set thriller in which she played an aid worker, was barely released in the U.S., while the would-be blockbuster *Pan* bombed. She says she chose the *Peter Pan* prequel, in part, because her agents "felt that I should maybe do a movie that people would actually see." But even if it had done well, she might have regretted it; asked about the backlash that ensued when it was announced that Mara was playing the originally Native American Tiger Lily, she says, "In hindsight, I wish I hadn't put myself in that position."

But *Carol* is something better than a return to form: It reestablishes her as a major talent, and with a role that's completely different from the one that made her a star. "She has so much integrity," Haynes says, "and such a surprising sense of understatement. She really understands the medium of film and its ability to convey emotional changes with very small, almost invisible gestures. She knows her own strength." Thanks to her subtle, affecting showing (in what is, it should be noted, a subtle, affecting film), Mara's a shoo-in for another Academy Award nomination—she's already won the Best Actress prize at Cannes—especially because the studio has opted to put her forward in the Supporting class, leaving Best Actress clear for Blanchett. (It's a move that some pundits are calling "category fraud.")

"It's such a weird process," Mara says of the campaign. "The whole thing feels kind of gross to me. If [Cate and I] were male and female, there probably would be no question." She's unsure whether she's allowed to say any more, but it's not hard to imagine how someone so scrupulous might feel about being accused, however indirectly, of cheating. "Getting nominated means something," she says finally. "You will get better parts, and I really do want people to see the film. But I don't feel like it's something I'm desperate for. I would forgo it all to keep my integrity."

This heartfelt statement reminds me of something she'd said earlier, while discussing the start of her career. "I'm not someone who's like, 'If I can't act, I don't know what I'll do.' If I had to act in things that I didn't believe in, or that didn't fulfill me, I'd rather do something else." It's a rare point of view for someone working at her level, but when I suggest that her personality type seems rather at odds with her chosen profession, she agrees: "It's totally the worst—it was the worst life decision ever." She's joking, I'm sure, though it's impossible to tell to what degree.

"There are certain times when I love [acting] so much," she continues, now serious, "and I feel so fulfilled by it. But it doesn't fulfill me most of the time. Like, I feel like an artist without an art form." Will she find something else, then? "I hope so. If I did, though, it wouldn't be for the world. It would be just for me." ●

#### COVERS

Studded-linen blouse, viscose and silk pants by *Louis Vuitton*, prices on request, at select Louis Vuitton stores nationwide, call 866-VUITTON or visit louisvuitton.com. Embroidered-chiffon crepon dress by *Gucci*, price on request, at select Gucci stores nationwide, visit gucci.com.

#### FIRST LOOK

PAGE 41: Coat, \$5,990, scarf, suitcase, pumps by *Gucci*, visit gucci.com. Bracelet by *Cartier*, call 800-CARTIER or visit cartier.us. Ring by *Maria Black*, visit maria-black.com.

#### TRENDS & ACCESSORIES

PAGE 42: T-shirt, bra, pants, hat, earrings by *Alexander Wang*, visit alexanderwang.com. Watch by *Rolux*, \$24,950, visit rolux.com. Top by *Chanel*, call 800-550-0005. Handbag by *Dior*, call 800-929-DIOR. PAGE 45: Top, pants by *Edu*, collection at Neiman Marcus stores nationwide. Necklaces by *Monica Rich Kosann*, \$6,895, visit monicarichkosann.com. Ankle boots by *Jimmy Choo*, call 866-524-6687 or visit jimmychoo.com. Necklaces by *Paula van der Hulst*, \$12,680, collection at modaoperandi.com. Oxford by *Robert Clergerie*, at Robert Clergerie (Beverly Hills). PAGE 47: Cuffs by *Verdura*, \$18,500 each, visit verdura.com. PAGE 48: Sandal by *Alexander Wang*, visit alexanderwang.com. Watch by *Hublot*, \$7,400, visit hublot.com. Watch by *Omega*, \$7,700, visit omegawatches.com. Handbag by *Louis Vuitton*, at select Louis Vuitton stores nationwide, visit louisvuitton.com. PAGE 49: Necklaces by *CVC Stones*, collection

at Barneys New York, Colette (Paris), modaoperandi.com, latestrevel.com. Necklaces by *Belperron*, visit belperron.com.

#### SHOPS

PAGE 57: Suitcase, \$7,000, backpack, handbag by *Chanel*, similar styles at Chanel boutiques nationwide. PAGE 58: Pin by *Sensi Studio*, to order at Greg Mills Ltd (NYC). PAGE 59: Coat by *Shrimps*, visit shrimps.co.uk. Cocktail glasses by *Artel*, collection at curtsnewyork.com. Crossbody bag by *Elizabeth and James*, collection at Nordstrom stores nationwide. PAGE 60: Flats by *Stubb's & Wootton*, at Stubb's & Wootton (NYC). Cream by *Elizabeth Arden*, at Elizabeth Arden counters nationwide.

#### BOOM BOOM TICKET

PAGE 62: Cardigan by *Chanel*, at Chanel boutiques nationwide, call 800-550-0005. Rings by *Garland Collection*, visit garlandcollection.com.

**POLITICAL? CORRECT.** PAGE 88: Shirt by *Karen Millen*, \$130, at Bloomingdale's stores nationwide, visit bloomingdales.com. Pants by *Maison Margiela*, collection at farfetch.com. Sneakers by *Adidas Originals*, \$65, visit adidas.com.

#### WELL OPENER

PAGE 95: Dress by *Gucci*, \$5,500, visit gucci.com.

#### UNDER HER SKIN

PAGE 98: Dress by *Salvatore Ferragamo*, call 866-337-7242. Sandals by *Christian Louboutin*, at Christian Louboutin (Miami). PAGE 99: Armband, ring, \$10,500, by *Belperron*, at Belperron (NYC). PAGE 101: Cuff by *Belperron*, \$23,000, at Belperron (NYC), visit belperron.com.

#### SHE'S COME UNDONE

PAGES 102-103: Jacket by *Cablin Klein Collection*, \$12,995, at Calvin Klein Collection (NYC). Earring by *Antia Ko*, \$7,875 (for pair), visit antiaiko.com. Necklaces by *Mizuki*, collection at Bergdorf Goodman (NYC). Tights by *Wolford*, visit wolford.com. Loafers by *Bally*, at Bally (NYC), call 844-44-BALLY. PAGE 104: Top, skirt, earring by *Salvatore Ferragamo*, call 866-337-7242. Tights by *Wolford*, visit wolford.com. PAGE 105: Vest, pants, leggings by *Isabel Marant*, at Isabel Marant (San Francisco, NYC). Earring by *Antia Ko*, \$7,875 (for pair), visit antiaiko.com. Necklaces by *Mizuki*, collection at Bergdorf Goodman (NYC). Pumps by *Malone Souliers*, visit malonesouliers.com. PAGE 106: Coat by *Fendi*, \$39,000, at Fendi (NYC). Tights by *Wolford*, visit wolford.com. Mules by *Hermès*, at Hermès stores nationwide, call 800-441-4488 or visit hermes.com. PAGE 107: Tights by *Wolford*, visit wolford.com. Pumps by *Malone Souliers*, visit malonesouliers.com. PAGE 108: Coat, shirt by *Michael Kors Collection*, call 866-709-KORS or visit michaelkors.com. Tights by *Wolford*, visit wolford.com. Pumps by *Malone Souliers*, visit malonesouliers.com. PAGE 109: Jumpsuit by *Boss*, at Hugo Boss stores nationwide, call 800-HUGO-BOSS. Necklaces by *Mizuki*, collection at Bergdorf Goodman (NYC). PAGE 110: Leggings by *Isabel Marant*, at Isabel Marant (San Francisco, L.A., NYC). Earring by *Salvatore Ferragamo*, call 866-337-7242. PAGE 111: Tights by *Wolford*, visit wolford.com. Loafers by *Bally*, at Bally (NYC), call 844-44-BALLY. PAGE 112: Top, skirt, earring by *Loewe*, at Loewe (Miami), collection at The Webster (Miami). PAGE 113: Earring by *Delfina Delettrez*, visit delfinadelettrez.com. Mules by *Hermès*, at Hermès stores nationwide, call 800-441-4488 or visit hermes.com. PAGE 114: Jacket, pants, swimsuit by *Hermès*, call 800-441-4488 or visit hermes.com. Necklaces by *Mizuki*, collection at Bergdorf Goodman (NYC). PAGE 115: Coat by *Miu Miu*, \$5,020, visit miuuiu.com. Earring by *Delfina Delettrez*, visit delfinadelettrez.com. Tights by *Wolford*, visit wolford.com. Loafers by *Bally*, at Bally (NYC), call 844-44-BALLY.

#### TOUR DE FRANCE

PAGES 116-117: Dress, pants, hat, handbag, sandals by *Chanel*, at Chanel boutiques nationwide. Earrings by *Garnazelle*, \$13,243, visit garnazelle.com. Ring by *Marco Biegi*, visit marcobiegi.com. PAGE 118: Sweater, skirt, \$9,000, sneakers by *Marc Jacobs*, at Marc Jacobs stores nationwide. Sunglasses by *Karen Walker*, collection at eyegoodies.com. Earrings by *John Hardy*, visit johnd Hardy.com. Bangle by *Chloé*, at Chloé boutiques nationwide. Rings by *Gucci*, at Gucci stores nationwide, visit gucci.com. Handbag by *Fendi*, similar styles at Fendi (NYC), visit fendi.com. PAGE 119: Top, skirt by *Fendi*, visit fendi.com. Headpiece by *Cherry Chau*, visit cherrychau.com. Sunglasses by *Marc Jacobs*, collection at Solstice Sunglasses boutiques nationwide. Necklaces by *Alison Lou*, visit alisonlou.com. Handbag by *Coach*, at select Coach stores nationwide, visit coach.com. Tights by *Gaspard Yurkievich* by *Gerbe*, collection at Elegance (NYC). Moccasins by *Gucci*, at select Gucci stores nationwide, visit gucci.com. PAGE 120: Sunglasses by *Coach*, at select Coach stores nationwide, visit coach.com. Earring by *Gucci*, at select Gucci stores nationwide, visit gucci.com. Bangle by *Chloé*, at Chloé boutiques nationwide. Bracelet by *Endless Jewelry*, visit endlessjewelry.us. Bracelets by *Maria Rudman* for *L'Éclaircir*, collection at leclaircir.com. Scarves by *Rockins London*, visit rockins.co.uk, collection at Otte (NYC), net-a-porter.com, matchefashion.com, avenue32.com, twelvestreetla.com. PAGE 121: Dress, necklaces, hand straps, loafers by *Louis Vuitton*, call 866-VUITTON or visit louisvuitton.com. Scarf by *Rockins London*, visit rockins.co.uk. PAGE 122: Dress, \$12,028, bra top, pants by *Etro*, at Etro stores nationwide. Sunglasses by *Wildfox Sun*, at Wildfox (West Hollywood), visit wildfox.com. Earrings by *Aurélie Bidermann*, at Aurélie Bidermann (NYC). Scarf by *Rockins London*, visit rockins.co.uk. Necklaces by *Chloé*, at Chloé boutiques nationwide. Belt by *Dries Van Noten*, visit driesvannoten.com. Handbag by *Coach*, at select Coach stores nationwide, visit coach.com. Sneakers by *Marc Jacobs*, at Marc Jacobs stores nationwide, visit marcjacobs.com. Bicycle by *Hermès*, \$11,900, at Hermès stores nationwide, call 800-441-4488 or visit hermes.com. PAGE 123: Barrettes by *Colette Malouf*, visit colettemalouf.com. Sunglasses by *Playboy*, visit playboy.com. Tote by *Sophie Hulme*, visit sophiehulme.com. Moccasins by *Gucci*, at select Gucci stores nationwide, visit gucci.com. PAGE 124: Sunglasses by *Wildfox Sun*, at Wildfox (West Hollywood), visit wildfox.com. Earring by *Garnazelle*, visit garnazelle.com. Brooch by *Lamin*, at Lamin (NYC). Ring by *Stephanie Kantis*, visit stephaniekantis.com. Ring by *Pamela Lae*, visit pamelaolay.com. PAGE 125: Blouse, skirt by *Coach*, visit coach.com. Scarf by *Echo*, visit echodesign.com. Handbag by *Chloé*, collection at Neiman Marcus stores nationwide, visit neimanmarcus.com. Bicycle by *Hermès*, \$11,900, at Hermès stores nationwide, call 800-441-4488 or visit hermes.com. PAGE 126: Hat by *Herschel Supply*, visit herschelsupply.com, collection at Nordstrom stores nationwide. Earrings by *Garnazelle*, \$13,243, visit garnazelle.com. Handbag, moccasins by *Gucci*, at select Gucci stores nationwide, visit gucci.com. PAGE 127: Jacket, \$13,000, blouse, skirt, \$9,800, beret, glasses, ring, moccasins by *Gucci*, at select Gucci stores nationwide. Earrings by *Aurélie Bidermann*, at Aurélie Bidermann (NYC). Rings by *Stephanie Kantis*, collection at Neiman Marcus stores nationwide. Socks by *Sacai*, visit sacai.jp.

#### THE PEN AND THE SWORD

PAGE 128: Earrings by *Prada*, at select Prada boutiques nationwide, visit prada.com. PAGE 129: Dress by *Marc Jacobs*, \$8,280, at Marc Jacobs stores nationwide. PAGE 131: Ring by *David Yurman*, \$6,800, at David Yurman (NYC), visit davidyurman.com.

Prices are approximate. ELLE recommends that merchandise availability be checked with local stores.



# ELLE EXTRA

JANUARY 2016

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## ELLE x NEIMAN MARCUS PROJECT BEAUTY

On Saturday October 17, Neiman Marcus Fort Worth hosted Project Beauty, a cosmetics fashion presentation, with special guest Julie Schott, ELLE.com's Senior Beauty and Fitness Editor. Featured vendors included La Mer, Trish McEvoy, Clarisonic, Laura Mercier, Clé de Peau Beauté, Dior, Chantecaille, Jo Malone London, Lancôme, and Iluminage.

Discover fall beauty must-haves at Neiman Marcus Fort Worth or [NeimanMarcus.com](http://NeimanMarcus.com).



## ELLE x VERA BRADLEY SHOPPING EVENT

This fall, ELLE and Vera Bradley partnered to host an event at Macy's Herald Square in celebration of Vera Bradley's latest collection. Hosted by Vera Bradley Brand Ambassador and Ice Dancing Gold Medalist Meryl Davis and ELLE Style Correspondent Alia Ahmed-Yahia, guests enjoyed shopping, mingling, and a surprise appearance from Vera Bradley Founder, Barbara Bradley Baekgaard.

Visit [VeraBradley.com](http://VeraBradley.com) to shop the new collections.



## HAPPY BIRTHDAY, BEAUTY! ELLE INNERCIRCLE MEMBERS GET A SWEET BIRTHDAY TREAT

In celebration of our 30th birthday this year, we're giving you a gift! 400 ELLE Inner Circle members will receive a surprise gift box filled with rich, indulgent treats from Lindt LINDOR to ring in the holiday season.

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Mercury may be retrograde nearly all month, but this celestial slowdown will allow time to pause, reflect, and give attention to other areas of life. Two friendly full moons should keep motivation at an all-time high—indeed, it's a new year, and time for a new you

# CAPRICORN

**THIS MONTH FOR CAPRICORN:** (DEC 22–JAN 19) With four heavenly bodies in your sign, you should be able to maneuver events to your liking this month. On the 9th, the Sun, new moon, Pluto, and Mercury will help you accomplish much across the areas of travel and academic exploration. Protecting you from its perch in Virgo will be good-luck Jupiter, which also trines the Sun on the 13th, your very best day for any initiations toward making money. Speaking of finances, the 23rd will also find you paying off a bill or receiving a check from a large commission, but avoid making any major purchases during Mercury's retrograde from the 5th to the 25th. You'll likely turn your attention to the past during this time, so if you need to rethink, reassess, or recontact, you'll be taking the correct course. Plenty of fun will also be on your agenda, thanks to Mars entering Scorpio and lighting your house of friendship, and then Venus touring your sign starting on the 23rd. You'll be showered with pixie dust and blessed with expanded allure, so if you need some extra warmth through the rest of winter, this is the time to find it.

**YOUR YEAR AHEAD:** The middle part of this year will be a time to go back and fix or improve actions, projects, and relationships. March 23rd brings the final eclipse in a two-year Aries-Libra series, and concerns will arise about your career or home life. Then Mercury retrogrades from August 30th to September 22nd, putting a hold on any big decisions. When Mars begins touring Capricorn on September 27th, you can finally start moving forward as you take full advantage of Jupiter in your ninth house, from September 9th to October 2017. Travel and intellectual pursuits will be blessed, but it's your professional life that will see you transform into a force of nature. Mars in Capricorn will also send a romantic surge, and just when the fiery planet makes its exit on November 9th, Venus shows up on the 12th, bringing all the admiration you could hope for.

## AQUARIUS (JAN 20–FEB 18)

Mars enters your prestigious 10th house of fame and honor this month, to stay until early March. You'll be assertive and eager to get ahead—and you'll have the perfect opportunity to do so on the 13th, when Jupiter, in your workaday sector, receives a gleaming signal from the Sun. You need to hold back a little, however, because Mercury will retrograde from the 5th to the 25th. Only proceed with confidence if professional progress is tied to a previous assignment or position. While you wait out Mercury's retrograde, schedule a trip around the 14th; you'll likely return refreshed and humming a happy tune. In terms of love and fun, Venus will tour your friendship sector until the 23rd. Allow any social diversions to distract you from the tensions of the day. And at the full moon on the 23rd, in Leo, you'll hear news about a romantic partner that

is likely to make you sit up, take notice, and smile with delight.

## PISCES (FEB 19–MAR 20)

The month opens with Mars in your travel sector on the 3rd, just in case you need a postholiday vacation. But don't go far: The 9th brings a new moon in Capricorn, accompanied by the Sun, Pluto, and Mercury—quite an energizing entourage. Friends will play a larger-than-usual role in your life as they help link you to all the right people in positions to further your aims. And with Mercury retrograde from the 5th to the 25th, don't be surprised if a familiar face resurfaces to aid with your dream project. A romantic partner seems to be going through a very prosperous phase—and on the 13th, you should get some sensational news. It could be financially related, as that area of your chart is finally due for some good luck. As for your health, at the 23rd's full



Mary J. Blige  
January 11, 1971

moon, you'll hit your stride in your well-being. Expect a personal best at the gym!

## ARIES (MAR 21–APR 19)

This will be one of the most important months of 2016 for your professional advancement. Mercury will retrograde in your 10th house of prestigious career success from the 5th to the 25th, suggesting that a forgone opportunity will present itself again—now at the right time, with the right compensation, and with you as precisely the right person to fill it. Beyond career, the pace of January will slow, so don't push against delays or press for answers that aren't necessary. Let nature take its course, and instead focus on those things that will see progress this month: health and finance. On the 13th, Jupiter, ideally angled to the Sun, will energize you at the gym and/or increase your earned income to help with your growing expenses. By month's end, romance enters the picture, as Jupiter again exerts a heavy influence, this time with the 23rd's beautiful full moon. You're the adventurer of the zodiac, so look your best and get out there—you never know what awaits you!

## TAURUS (APR 20–MAY 20)

It appears you need a holiday from the holiday, and with your travel sector packed with heavenly bodies—the Sun, Mercury, Pluto, and the 9th's new

Hunter Abrams/BFA.com



moon—you may alight on your magic carpet for a far-off journey. Days later, on the 13th, Jupiter syncs with the Sun to intensely fan the fires of romance. On the 14th, Mercury, planet of communication, joins the conversation with Jupiter, and though Mercury will retrograde, your love life should still be highly fueled. Beyond travel, your yearning to expand your horizons will be powerfully strong, so if you can't get away, align yourself with an endeavor that will expose you to a new subject. At month's end, the 23rd's full moon in Leo will bring attention to your home life, where Jupiter will be amazingly helpful in remedying a stubborn issue.

## GEMINI (MAY 21–JUNE 21)

Your workload will be heavy due to the appearance of Mars in your assignment sector, now through March 5th. Have faith that your dedication will add up to praise and industry attention. Finances will be a main focus after the 9th's new moon, so seize the opportunity to meet with the professionals you rely on to advise you on your holdings. With your ruler, Mercury, now retrograde from the 5th to the 25th in your house of other people's money, you're in an ideal position to find savvy ways to make any needed adjustments toward a higher net worth. The 14th could present itself as a gold-star day for such progress, thanks to a golden beam from Jupiter. In terms of a close and/or business partnership, you'll be thinking about how you two can work together over the long road ahead. Venus, in your committed-relationship sector most of the month, will ensure any collaborating remains copacetic.

## CANCER (JUNE 22–JULY 22)

Mars will tour your most romantic sector all month, continuing until March 5th, so you could find yourself getting lots of attention and admiration from a partner, whether new or established. Then, on the 9th, a crowd of celestial bodies (Mercury, Pluto, the Sun, and the new moon) in your commitment house will gently push you toward something deeper. If a wedding is out of the question, you may be thinking about a collaboration in business. Joining forces with a colleague this month will certainly get you ahead. However you link with another, it won't come without a surprise or two, thanks to Uranus's pesky presence with the new moon. By the 23rd, the full moon will turn your attention to finances: The sooner you organize your files, re-

ceipts, and portfolios, the sooner you could get a possible payout.

## LEO (JULY 23–AUG 22)

Assignments will be pouring in, so be ready to hit the ground running as soon as the new moon arrives on the 9th. In the days that follow, more than one project is likely to be sent your way, but with Mercury retrograde in your workaday sector from the 5th to the 25th, better to make a plan of attack for your to-do list rather than make big moves on any big projects. In love, Venus in Sagittarius—there since December 30th and to stay until the 23rd—is an ideal placement for you. Venus will orbit close to Saturn, making an exact conjunction on the 8th. By learning the give-and-take necessary in any relationship, you'll gain considerable growth this year. Saturn in your fifth house may also deliver the creative project of your dreams, but it could require considerable funds to achieve. Luckily, Jupiter has settled in your second house of earned income, so you should stay firmly in the black through January.

## VIRGO (AUG 23–SEPT 22)

For enjoying romance, there will be no better time than January 2016. On the 9th, a bevy of planets will be living it up in your house of true love: Pluto (the great transformer), the Sun and new moon (together presenting fresh opportunities), and Mercury (news). Further, Jupiter will be in Virgo, the very best possible aspect for attracting your one great love. And if you must be out one day this month to make that happen, make it the 13th. Travel may also dot your schedule, for Mars will spend all month in your short-distance-journey sector. Your best days to go would be near the 14th, when Mercury and Jupiter join forces. But stay at home over the 20th or 31st—Mercury will be at odds with Uranus on both days. Keep your health strong this month, as you may feel drained by the 23rd's full moon and the myriad of concerns that might come with it.

## LIBRA (SEPT 23–OCT 22)

Home will be where the action is if you take advantage of the four heavenly bodies in your living-space sector. Whether moving, renovating, or simply decluttering as a New Year's resolution, act now. You'll have your best chance in 2016 to look at your options and get results. As for any big purchases, however, hold off on such things until after Mercury's retrograde, from the 5th to the 25th. With

Mars moving through your second house of savings, cash flow will be tight anyway, so use Mercury's retrograde to plan for the future. In romance, you'll enjoy three weeks of bliss as Venus tours Sagittarius until the 23rd. Saturn's presence means that if you're single, you're more determined than ever to build a relationship that can stand the test of time. For attached Libras, you'll find taking a short trip will draw you closer, especially if you go over the weekend of the 23rd. If you have children, get a babysitter—you and your partner are due for some major quality time.

## SCORPIO (OCT 23–NOV 21)

Mars enters Scorpio on the 3rd, to stay until March 5th, putting you in the driver's seat in your professional and personal life. Just be mindful that Mercury is retrograde from the 5th to the 25th; you'll want to avoid negotiations and signing any agreements. Instead, use the energy of the full moon on the 23rd to rally people to your causes, and then be ready for action once Mercury returns to regular orbit. One benefit of retrograde: Your schedule will free up and you can enjoy an uptick in your social life. The 13th is a perfect day to be out and about with friends, and over the weekend of the 16th, when Mars signals Neptune (nestled in your true love house), you'll be the apple of just about everyone's eye. Neptune then links with Venus over the weekend of the 30th, bringing love both nascent and long-held to a new level.

## SAGITTARIUS (NOV 22–DEC 21)

Jupiter is positioned in your house of career fame and honors until September 9th, so your professional outlook this year could not be better. By the 13th, your performance at the office and your earned income will be linked, and with a strong beam shared between the Sun and Jupiter, you can expect to be rewarded. However, this doesn't mean you'll be front and center all month. Remember, Mercury is retrograde from the 5th to the 25th, meaning some of your best work may be behind the scenes. Venus entered Sagittarius on December 30th, to stay until the 22nd of this month, stirring up many amorous amusements. It's the perfect time to circulate, and single Sags will have their best luck on the 12th, when Venus is in ideal angle to Uranus. The 23rd is a red-letter day for all, especially if travel is folded into the mix. Take a trip, and let a new world inspire new love. ●

# AMERICAN EPIC

In anticipation of his return as Han Solo in *Star Wars: Episode VII—The Force Awakens*, Harrison Ford chats with Mickey Rapkin, who finds out why this living legend has always sent pulses racing at light speed

It's been almost 40 years since Harrison Ford first became Han Solo—that brash, rogue guardian of the galaxy, and the character that made him a star. But success was never guaranteed. Ford, born in Illinois to an advertising executive father and a homemaker mother, started as a contract player in the studio system before walking away, choosing to work as a carpenter rather than take unfulfilling bit parts. Holding out paid off wildly, both professionally and financially. Between *Star Wars*, the *Indiana Jones* franchise, and hits like *The Fugitive*, Ford's films have made billions at the box office. He's always played by his own rules, living on a 700-acre ranch in Wyoming for much of his adult life—as far removed from Hollywood as you can get. And he's been married three times, first to his college sweetheart and then to *E.T.* screenwriter Melissa Mathison. Now 73, Ford and his wife, actress Calista Flockhart, live in New York with their 14-year-old son, Liam, who no doubt is the perfect age to watch his father get back behind the wheel of the Millennium Falcon as Han Solo in *Star Wars: Episode VII—The Force Awakens* this winter.

**ELLE:** This is a column about women. It's a chance to tell stories—

**HARRISON FORD:** [Exhales] Oh God.

**ELLE:** Nobody explained this to you?

**HF:** No.

**ELLE:** Well, let's just see how it goes. Carrie Fisher once talked about a night you two spent partying with the Rolling Stones while filming *The Empire Strikes Back*. Do you remember that?

**HF:** God no. Take a look at the cast of characters. How could I remember it?

**ELLE:** She said you two were still drunk when you showed up on set.

**HF:** I vaguely remember it. I could make some shit up. But you're on a higher plane of journalism.

**ELLE:** *Playboy* announced they're no longer featuring naked women.

**HF:** Really? What other area of expertise do they have?

**ELLE:** It launched when you were 11. Do you remember your first *Playboy*?

**HF:** It probably wasn't mine. Usually

it was something that was shared. Somebody stole their father's or uncle's and showed it around school. But it wasn't mine. [Laughs] I'm still saying, "It wasn't mine, Mom!"

**ELLE:** You spent some time living in Wyoming. Were you trying to recreate a simpler existence?

**HF:** No, I was just trying to get out of what we referred to as the Silly State—that being California. Everyone walks around with the idea of an idyllic, natural world that they maybe experienced on a vacation or saw pictures of. Wyoming was mine.

**ELLE:** You were 35 when fame hit. What was your first splurge on a woman?

**HF:** I don't remember splurging. The first check that came in the mail went to pay overdue bills. I think they should have found that pretty impressive.

**ELLE:** *Working Girl* was ahead of its time. You were basically the ingenue. I mean, there's a scene where you change your shirt in the office—and the female secretaries applaud. Did you feel objectified?

**HF:** I got the joke. I thought it was funny. But it's a throwaway. The whole notion of being a sex symbol was just silly. I never found myself attractive.

**ELLE:** Are you guilty of taking a woman up in your plane to impress her?

**HF:** Oh God, yes. Of course. What other use is there for it? Calista used to love flying with me—in little airplanes, just the two of us. She would even ride to the airport on the back of my motorcycle. On a good day, the beauty of where we were.... It was an obvious move, nonetheless.

**ELLE:** You've gotten married three times. Are you a romantic?

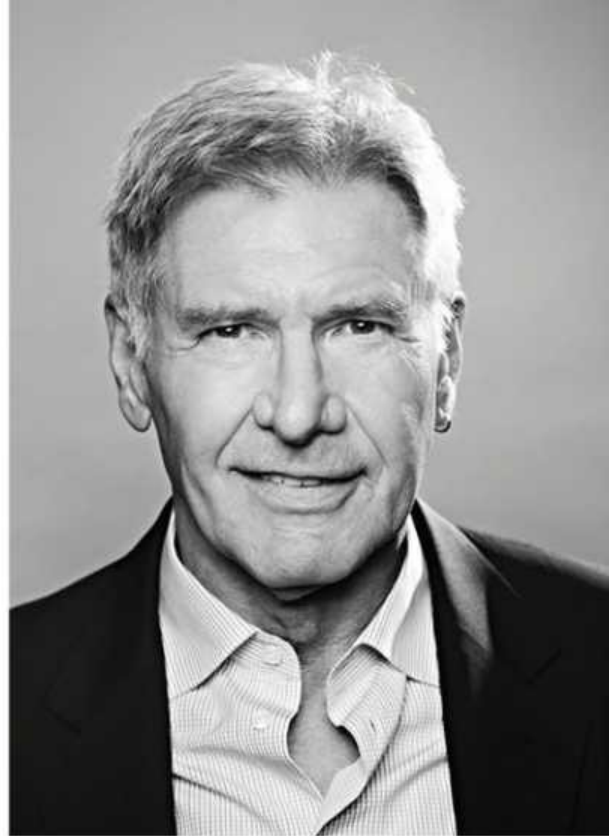
**HF:** Yeah, I'm a romantic at heart. But the reason I got married three times is not because I'm a romantic.

**ELLE:** Why then? You happened to meet three beautiful, smart women?

**HF:** I think that would look good in print....

**ELLE:** You met Calista at the Golden Globes. Supposedly, she intentionally spilled a drink on you just to say hello.

**HF:** A drink was spilled. But not at all intentionally. It was absolutely my fault. I



think more of it went on her than on me.

**ELLE:** Do you believe it was fate?

**HF:** If it had been fate, she wouldn't have asked me what I was doing there. I don't think she even knew who I was.

**ELLE:** Come on.

**HF:** Somebody might have told her. I'm sure she'd never seen any of my movies. She's a very serious theater actress. How the hell would she know who I was?

**ELLE:** Would you tell me about a woman who's intimidated you?

**HF:** Oh, you mean Sigourney Weaver?

**ELLE:** Was she intimidating?

**HF:** I'm just kidding. They all intimidate me. They're scary. They're mysterious.

**ELLE:** Has a woman ever made you cry?

**HF:** Fuck yes. They make me cry in movies. They make me cry when I'm worried about them. They make me cry when I've hurt them. They make me cry just for the hell of it sometimes.

**ELLE:** I have to ask: What's with the earring?

**HF:** I don't much care about it. I forgot about it. People will still look at me and say, "When did you get that?" And I'll say, "About 25 years ago."

**ELLE:** Is it about feeling virile?

**HF:** No, no. It's just an earring. Some people wear two of them.

**ELLE:** Fine. When you were filming *Return of the Jedi*, did you ever think Leia's bikini would become so iconic?

**HF:** I didn't even think it was going to be in the movie. She's a princess. What the hell is she doing walking around in a bikini? ●



A black and white advertisement for Tom Ford Noir. The background features a man with a beard and a woman with blonde hair in a close embrace. In the foreground, two bottles of Tom Ford Noir fragrance are shown: a standard bottle and a taller, more ornate 'Extreme' version. The brand name 'TOM FORD' and the product name 'NOIR' are visible on the bottles.

# TOM FORD NOIR

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